Hafa Adai!

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The Saipan Community School Elementary Christmas Program was held last night at the Saipan Community Church in Susupe. More than 200 elementary students of the school took part in the program that was watched by the students' parents and friends as well as the school faculty and officials and church members.

MARK RABAGO

3 vie for House speaker post

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

With less than a month before 19th House of Representatives convenes, the race for the House speakership is turning out to be a three-horse contest, with incumbent House Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) set to be challenged by Rep. Ramon Tebuteb (Ind-Saipan) and House floor leader Ralph Demapan (R-Saipan).

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Deleon Guerrero

Tebuteb

Demapan

Defeated NI mayoral bet's election contest dismissed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo dismissed yesterday the election contest filed by defeated Northern Islands mayoral candidate Vicente Cruz Santos Jr. against mayor-elect Francisco Jerome K. Aldan and the Commonwealth Election Commission.

At a hearing that lasted less than five hours, Govendo ruled that the court lacks jurisdiction over the subject matter as Santos' lawsuit was timely barred. The judge said he will issue a written order that contains more explanations today, Wednesday.

After the judge announced his decision, the beaming Aldan approached and shook hands with Santos, who is his uncle. Many NI voters from both Santos' and Aldan's camps watched the hearing.

See DEFEATED on Page 4

Speaker touts open primary as fix to runoff woes

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

House Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) wants the Commonwealth Election Commission to ditch runoff elections and use an open primary instead to determine the next CNMI governor.

He plans to introduce a bill addressing the lapses of the current process of electing the islands' chief executive, which saw less than a third of off-island absentee ballots mailed out for the runoff eventually counted by the CEC.

"I'm proposing there would be a primary election for all wanting to run for governor in September. It's for anyone and it's called an open primary. So if there are five candidates in September

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Six people are dead after a small private jet slams into a house.
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Scarecrows outnumber people in one dying Japanese town
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Prince William and his wife, Kate have a first full day in New York.
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GOT A NEWS TIP?
TEL: 235-6397 235-2440
FAX: 235-3740
EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

DENNIS B. CHAN
Herbert Johnston, founder of the Guam Contractors Association Trades Academy, speaks to Marianas High School students yesterday.

NMTI hosts talk on skilled craft careers

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Herbert Johnston from the Guam Contractors Association Trades Academy spoke to Marianas High School students yesterday morning about the opportunities in store for them as potential skilled craft professionals.

Johnston is responsible for certifying instructors at the Northern Marianas Technical Institute. He has certified a dozen instructors for the institute, who in turn certify other local instructors, he said in an interview yesterday.

He called this "local people, teaching local people."

"Even throughout the Chamorro culture, we've always had pride in our workmanship. What we want to do is try to encourage that and try to focus it into construction because there is a dire need not only on Guam and Saipan but throughout the world for skilled construction workers and we would like to improve on that," he told *Saipan Tribune.*

NMTI students and even instructors have matriculated over to Guam to work, he said, with some even going to the U.S. mainland to get good paying jobs.

He started GCA Trades Academy in Guam, and was previously asked to start a school on Saipan, he said, but to this he gave a "yes" and a "no."

"I said I got too many things to do but I can show you how to it, and you show them how to do it," he said. He called this "keeping money local, but standards… national."

How has the school grown since he started assisting in 2008? He said it has been "difficult."

"It's got its challenges. The situation in Saipan is a whole lot different than Guam but we've got a lot of things that are similar. We both need skilled workers but Guam is a little bit bigger, Guam has a little bit more money floating around. [It has] a lot more private sector going on, but the opportunities are still here," he said.

GCA Trade Academy is accredited under the National Center for Construction Education and Research, and as partners with NMTI, they offer the same national, standardized curriculum, according to Johnston.

He told students yesterday that there are about 600,000 jobs open in the construction field, and if there are no workers, projects can't be built, he said. This makes professionals "extremely valuable," he added.

Two million skilled craft professionals will be needed by 2017, he said. He described NMTI's and GCA Trades' curriculum as competency-based. "Once you take a test and a pass it, it's over. It depends on you," he said.

He added that classes are modular, and usually three weeks long. He told the students that a hundred years ago thatched roofs were built together by the men and women on Saipan and Guam working together.

Because of this, construction, he said, is "leaving your mark" and "reliving a tradition." He encouraged students to explore the career, and that all GCA Trades Academy and NMTI ask is a student's genuine interest and a willingness to learn.

Inos creates transition committee

As promised, Gov. Eloy S. Inos established a transition committee to effectuate the transition to the incoming administration composed of himself as governor-elect and lieutenant governor-elect, Senate President Ralph DLG. Torres (R-Saipan).

In a memo to all departments dated Dec. 9, 2014, Inos wrote, "I have established a Committee on Transition (Transition Committee) under the Office of the Governor-Elect, to provide for the orderly transition for the incoming Inos-Torres administration."

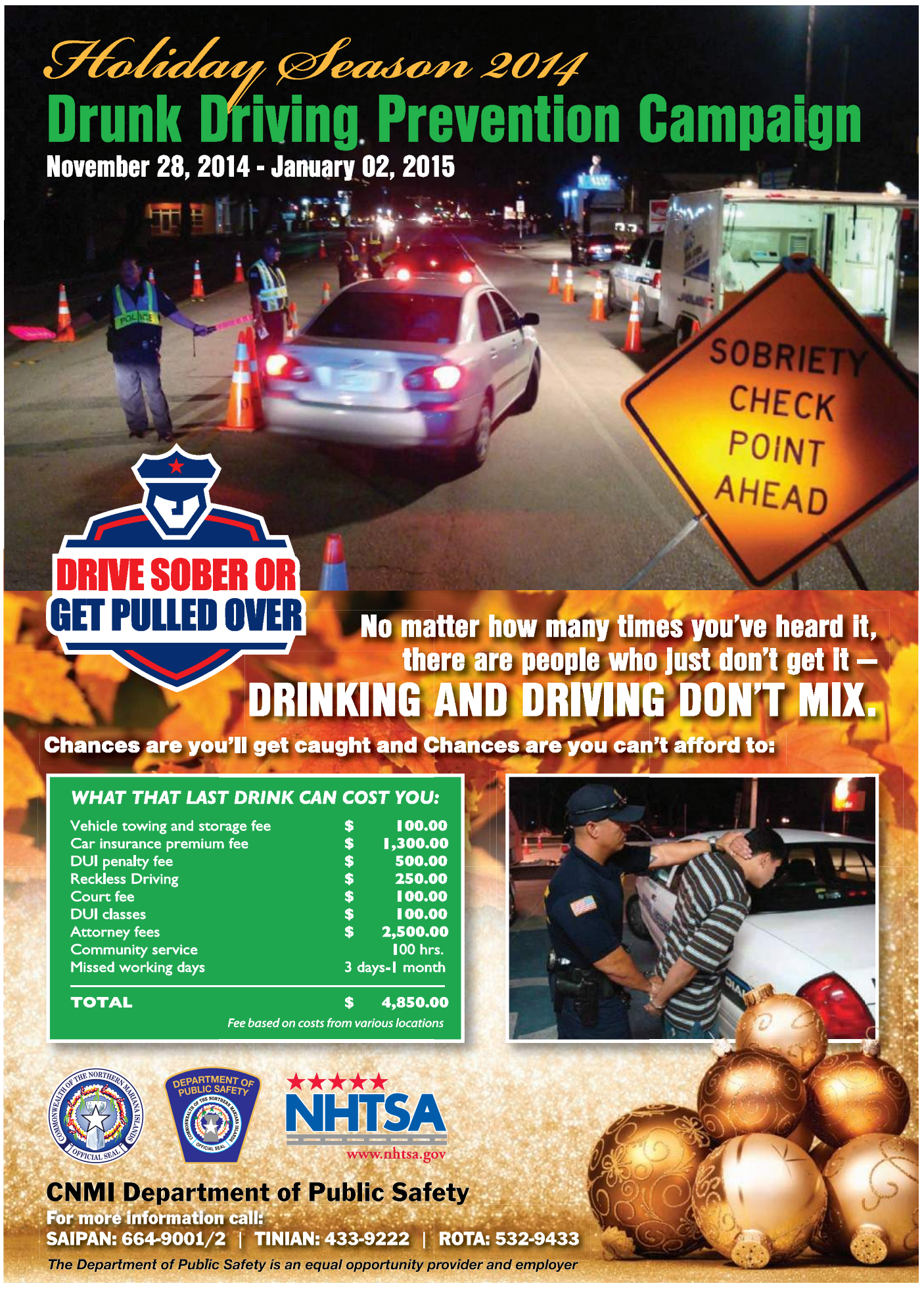
Inos said he appointed Gregorio M. Camacho to serve as the chairman of the transition committee and ordered that information be made readily available to him.

"Access to information must be made readily available by the head of each department, board, commission, instrumentality, independent entity, including any government corporation.

"To ensure a smooth timely transition review, please designate an adequate work area for the committee to conduct their business," added Inos in his memo.

In related news, Inos also issued a hiring freeze effective immediately to all government departments and agencies.

"All personnel actions including, but not limited to, change in salary compensation and re-allocations, shall be frozen until further notice," Inos wrote in a memo also issued yesterday, Dec. 9, 2014. ***(Mark Rabago)***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November 28, 2014 - January 02, 2015
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BOE looks to address connectivity issues on other islands

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI State Board of Education chair Herman Guerrero would like the government's help in addressing connectivity issues in schools on Rota and Tinian.

He and Education Commissioner Dr. Rita Sablan were recently on Rota where he said staff and students found their Internet capability "frustrating" at times.

"[A student] was sharing her experience one time. She was taking an exam, and it dropped the connection," he told Board of Education members at a recent committee meeting.

"It's frustrating," he said. "The kids cannot do projects because they cannot get online. Teachers depend on the Internet to use resources. I would like to perhaps in January include that in our conversation with the governor to see how he can strengthen and enhance the connectivity of the other two islands."

It was gathered from the meeting that purchase orders had been made for new wireless devices for the two islands, which would be installed this week at the high schools there. DSL cost is almost $30 to $33 per meg, it was learned, while comparatively, in the mainland it costs $1 to $3.

Board member Tanya King called it a "bigger issue, an islandwide issue," in regards to limited Internet service competition.

Guerrero

In an interview, Guerrero said the new administration could have four options to work with. First, the governor could encourage IT&E to enhance connectivity; second, the CNMI could try to access any developing fiber optic routes from the Micronesia to Guam; third, the governor could invite other investors to come into the area. Or fourth, with the military's interest in the region, perhaps their help could be sought, Guerrero said.

George Bisala, a junior from Rita Inos Jr. Sr. High School on Rota, described their server situation as "alright."

"We do have regular access in the school, but sometimes the problem is when we have homework and some people don't have Internet at home. I'd say, since Rota doesn't exactly have the easiest access to encyclopedias, history books, and those sort, the Internet is really a faster and reliable way to get resources to help them learn," he said.

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Customs looking at methods to dispose of smuggled cigarettes

Mafnas

The Division of Customs is looking at other ways of disposing smuggled cigarettes after its earlier plan to incinerate them went up in smoke.

Customs director Jose C. Mafnas said his office has all but abandoned its plan to have the contraband items incinerated after the Commonwealth Ports Authority quoted them a price of $2-plus per pound.

Using their calculations, Mafnas said it would cost them $25,000 to have the 12,000 cases of smuggled cigarettes incinerated by CPA. The 12,000 cases of cigarettes represent the amount of contraband cigarettes they have in their stock room waiting to be disposed.

He said options they're looking at now is doing the disposal manually again or just loading them all in a dump truck and sending them to the landfill in Marpi.

"The last time we did it manually we opened every cartoon, took out all the cigarettes, and soaked them all in water. That was just 2,000 cartons and it took us five days to complete. A total of five people worked on that but certain days only two because three had to work on the container," said Mafnas.

"We need to figure out how we can do it at low cost. Before we go that route (Marpi landfill) we have to check with the [Department of Public Works] secretary for final approval," he added.

Last Nov. 15, Customs seized more than 1,000 cartons of cigarettes loaded inside a 20-foot container from the Philippines after the importer failed to declare the items. The container also included over 200 cases of liquor that were mislabeled and were also confiscated by Customs agents. ***(Mark Rabago)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

NMDC board members meeting today

The Northern Marianas Descent Corp. board will be having a mandatory meeting today, Dec. 10, 2014, at the Garapan Resource & Learning Center (behind the Garapan basketball court), from 2pm to 4pm. On the agenda is approval of NMDC's 2014-2016 goals. All NMDC board members (only) are urged to attend this mandatory meeting. For board members who are unable to attend the meeting, contact NMDC board president Herman Deleon Guerrero at 287-6462.

For persons of Northern Marianas descent interested in becoming a member of NMDC and/or a NMDC board member, email the organization at nmdccnmi2013@gmail.com or contact Deleon Guerrero for more information. ***(NMDC)***

Sobriety checkpoints on Tinian

The Tinian Department of Public Safety's Traffic Section will be conducting DUI/sobriety checkpoints on the dates and time listed below:

■ Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014, from 6pm to 7:15pm: Southbound lane along Broadway Road by Housing Turnkey.

■ Monday, Dec. 22, 2014, from 6pm to 7:15pm: Southbound lane on Broadway Road by the Youth Center in San Jose Village.

Each checkpoint will last at least 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes). Checkpoints are subject to be terminated if it begins to rain. This activity is part of the department's effort to deter, detect and apprehend impaired drivers and to ensure that all vehicle occupants are protected.

In addition, traffic officers will be conducting highway criminal interdictions and laser (speed detection) enforcement.

For more information, contact Police Officer III Wally F. Villagomez at (670) 433-9222 or 433-2041. ***(PR)***

HSC-25 training at Naval Base Guam

SANTA RITA, Guam—Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron-25 will conduct overwater aerial maneuvers in the vicinity of North Tipalo Bay (Old Wives Beach) from Dec. 9, 2014, to Dec. 11, 2014.

The daily exercise will be conducted during daylight hours only, between 8am and 4pm. HSC-25 will deploy training devices (practice flares) during the course of the exercise to simulate tactical aerial maneuvers.

The practice flares have a yellow illumination characteristic (glow) and will be ejected overwater and well clear of landmasses. The practice flares will dissipate in the air and represent no environmental hazard. ***(PR)***

Air Force training at Naval Base Guam

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct training of Orote Point on Dec. 9-10 from 9am to 6pm. The general public especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators are advised to stay outside 10 nautical miles from 13°-25'N/144°-38'E during the times and date indicated. ***(PR)***

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Jorgensen fee of $800K OK'd; Lord denied fees

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge Frances M. Tydingco-Gatewood approved yesterday the CNMI agreement to pay $800,000 in attorney's fees and costs to Betty Johnson's original counsel, Bruce Jorgensen.

In a separate order yesterday, Tydingco-Gatewood denied awarding fees to Johnson's other counsel, Timothy Lord.

Tydingco-Gatewood said having considered the CNMI government's and Jorgensen's stipulated motion for approval of his fees, as well as all arguments and submissions, she finds the settlement agreement to be fair and reasonable.

The judge said the settlement agreement was reached after the parties in Johnson's class action participated in extensive settlement discussions with Hawaii chief bankruptcy judge Robert J. Faris.

With respect to Lord's petition for fees and costs, Tydingco-Gatewood finds that Lord has not shown that his work produced a concrete beneficial result for the class.

Tydingco-Gatewoood, however, stated that she is disappointed that Jorgensen did not include the work performed by Lord or his paralegal in his original fee petition or in his settlement discussions with the CNMI government, especially since it was he who sought the assistance of Lord during the initial stages of this litigation.

The judge said for reasons not completely clear to the court, Jorgensen and Lord parted ways on less than amicable terms.

"Because there was no agreement between Mr. Lord and Mr. Jorgensen with regard to the allocation of attorneys' fees if the plaintiff were to prevail, the court reviewed the record to evaluate the respective contributions of counsel to obtaining the benefit for the class," she said.

Lord's initial demand for payment was either $3.6 million or $5.9 million. The CNMI government opposed granting fees to Lord.

Tydingco-Gatewood had already approved the payment for Johnson's other counsels—Bronster Hoshibata law firm in the amount of $6.5 million and Stephen Woodruff in the amount of $185,000.

DEFEATED

From Page 1

In an interview, Aldan said the judge was correct in dismissing the case for its untimely filing.

"This matter is more of a statutory legality contest," Aldan said, adding that Santos failed to bring the complaint to the Superior Court in a timely manner.

Attorney Viola Alepuyo, counsel for Aldan, said they're happy with Govendo's ruling but that election challenges are very hard.

"It's hard not just for the people being challenged but also hard for the person challenging," Alepuyo said.

Santos' counsel, Janet H. King, said they respect the proceedings but reserve their right to appeal. King said she will confer with Santos and see what they can do from here.

"What happened today is historic and important to the election process for individual voters to be able to challenge portions of the election. That's why we're here," King said.

Govendo ruled that the court has no jurisdiction over the 40 voters' challenge that Santos brought up in his election contest.

In granting Aldan's and CEC's motions to dismiss as to the voters' challenge issue, Govendo said the election law has explicit rules for voter's challenge.

Govendo said the Legislature's intent was to expedite the election procedures as it was trying to avoid another election and get a system in place.

The judge said Santos filed a formal complaint before the CEC and it was denied, and he appealed and was denied.

Govendo said once the appellate board denies Santos' appeal, he has five days to appeal to the Superior Court.

The judge said if Santos timely appealed it to the Superior Court, the court could have kept the questioned 40 votes set aside while the case is pending.

"The purpose of this procedure is to avoid another election. Election is costly. Northern Islands' election is costly," Govendo said.

The judge said even if the Nov. 4 election comes around, if Santos appealed to the court, the court could have set aside the challenged 40 votes while the election contest was pending.

"Plaintiff did not do that. This claim is time barred," Govendo pointed out.

He said Santos stated he knew about the 40 voters as early as September 2014.

Govendo said Santos has seven days to file the election challenge after he learned either on Nov. 5 or 7 about the 40 voters allowed to vote, yet filed the complaint on Nov. 19.

"The court lacks jurisdiction. That's why we have this law that has to be followed," he said.

Govendo said with the ruling, he wants to hear Santos' challenge to Aldan's candidacy.

Govendo asked attorney Janet H. King, counsel for Santos, to call her client to the witness stand and ask him why Aldan is not qualified to be a candidate.

King said before making argument she is asking the court to reconsider the ruling.

But Govendo quickly stated he is not reconsidering his ruling as he has read and studied all the pleadings and heard the arguments.

Govendo said Santos' allegations about Aldan not being eligible to run may also be time-barred so he wants to listen to Santos' testimony.

Govendo asked King to limit the questioning as to when Santos did know that Aldan was not eligible to run.

The judge said he is interested as to when Santos first determined that Aldan is not qualified.

Santos testified that he is from Alamagan and that Aldan just established his residency on Pagan three months ago.

Santos said when he saw Aldan in Pagan in May 2014 he already suspected that his nephew was going to run for mayor. Santos also disclosed that he had heard that Aldan would be running for mayor since 2012.

Santos said under the law, in order to be eligible to run, an NI voter needs to establish three years of residency prior to the election.

Alepuyo argued that at least on the Aug. 6 deadline to file for candidacy, Santos knew that Aldan was a candidate yet he did not file a timely complaint.

Alepuyo said his client should not be punished because Santos did not file a timely complaint.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

3 VIE

From Page 1

Deleon Guerrero said nothing is set in stone yet as far as the leadership of the 19th House of Representatives is concerned but confirmed that he wants to continue occupying the position.

"If my colleagues are willing to support me, then I will again be the next speaker. That's what it boils down to. It's a numbers game. It really depends on the group on who they want to vote for," he said.

Tebuteb, who is currently chairman of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation, has also made known his intention to vie for the speakership.

"I just wish the speaker would endorse me," he said, eliciting a laugh from Deleon Guerrero as both were in the same room when interviewed by *Saipan Tribune*.

Deleon Guerrero and Tebuteb may be considered greybeards in the House as both came to the lower chamber at the same time in 2002 after winning seats in the 2001 election.

Demapan didn't beat around the bush when asked about his plans for the 19th Legislature.

"Of course it's no secret I'm vying for the speakership. Talks are still ongoing and I wish I could comment more. Yes, I'm interested in being the next speaker and I'm humbly requesting the members to believe in me," he told *Saipan Tribune* in a separate interview.

The incoming three-term lawmaker, however, noted that if his quest for the speakership fails, he would have no problem working with the next House speaker.

"If I also did not manage to pull through I will continue to work with whoever the speaker is and I will give him my 100 percent."

In the House, 13 of the 20 incoming representatives are independent candidates with the remaining seven belonging to the GOP.

Aside from Deleon Guerrero and Tebuteb, re-elected independents include Anthony P. Sablan, Edmund Villagomez, Ralph N. Yumul, Anthony T. Benavente, Roman Benavente, and Larry Deleon Guerrero.

Independent incoming representatives include Edwin Propst, Edwin Aldan, Francis Taimanao, Vinson Sablan, and Blas Jonathan "BJ" Attao.

Aside from Demapan, other incumbent GOP representatives are Felicidad Ogumoro, John Paul P. Sablan, and George Camacho, while newly elected Republican representatives are Angel Demapan, Joseph "Leepan" T. Guerrero, and Glenn L. Maratita.

The 18th Legislature *sine die* [final session] is on Jan. 5. 2015, while the 19th Legislature will be inaugurated on Jan. 12, 2015.

TOUTS

From Page 1

and people get to vote who will be the top 2. Theoretically it could be two GOP candidates who get the Top 2 and whoever is the Top 2 will run in the general election. Basically the general elections will be the end as someone will already emerge as governor," Deleon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune.*

Under this proposal, the CEC will conduct the open primary two months before the general elections.

Deleon Guerrero said holding the open primary in September would give the two winning candidates in the primary ample time to campaign as well as court the supporters of the losing contenders in the primary "giving them enough time align to whoever the top 2 are."

Another advantage on the open primary, the speaker said, is CEC would no longer need to conduct two elections if the No. 1 in the gubernatorial race doesn't get 50 percent plus one of the votes during the general elections. He said this will also lead to cost savings not only in the part of CEC but the government as well.

"There's enough time and enough time for the off-island absentee votes also. So in the general election they send out the off-island absentee ballots and once they come in it's already final. They don't have to wait for two weeks, as there would be no runoff," he said.

Deleon Guerrero said he doesn't want a repeat of what happened in the 2014 runoff election for governor where only 515 off-island absentee ballots were counted out of the more than 2,100 originally sent out by CEC.

"I think the absentee voters were deprived in a way because there was almost not enough time. This is what this bill plans to address, to give our off-island voters ample time to be able to decide. I saw the news and I read what the governor said but he doesn't know I already have a bill. I've been hearing reports from off-island. First of all, the time line is just not enough. CEC has to prepare ballots and send them and get it back. It's nobody's fault, it's just the postal system that we have no control off. This bill should take care of that issue. We really need to fix it and we will fix it," he added.

Rep. Ramon Tebuteb (Ind-Saipan) seconded Deleon Guerrero's call for reform in the runoff process. He said he would support the speaker's bill.

"I'm good with it. I will support the speaker's bill. Do we really have control of that [postal system]? The CEC really tried its best to send it out in time but given those factors, we figure that time [14-day requirement] was really difficult."

Inos on Friday lamented the low number of off-island absentee ballots that were received by absentee voters and the low number of ballots that were eventually received by the CEC. He called on the Legislature to amend the current law governing the runoff election so off-island absentee voters will not be deprived of their right to vote in future elections.

Speakers to discuss the survival of culture in modern world

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Dr. Laura M. Torres Souder and Dr. Samuel Betances will be speaking on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota on the issue of the "island-global divide."

The lectures will ask how Chamorro and Carolinian cultures can be maintained while the CNMI prepares to be players in the global economy.

The speakers will also ask how the CNMI can maintain its culture while providing its children with the skills they need to adapt in the 21st century.

Souder is a Chamorro historian and advocate for indigenous and women's rights. Betances has taught in Guam and the CNMI about maintaining language and culture.

On Saipan, they will speak at the American Memorial Park today at 6:30pm. On Dec. 11, they will speak at 9:30am with PSS Central Office staff at the Board of Education conference room. Later that day at 3pm they will speak to teachers and school principals.

On Dec. 12, they will be on Tinian to speak at the high school at 9am. On Dec. 13, they will speak at the Tinian Public Library at 1:30pm.

On Rota, they will speak at the Rita Hocog Inos Jr. Sr. High School at 1pm on Dec. 15. They will speak later at 5pm that same day at the Rota's Mayor Office.

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council sponsors the events.

Hotel occupancy at 72 pct. in Oct., 83 pct. in Nov.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands reported 71.53 percent occupancy among 11 member hotels for October 2014, a .01-percent decrease compared to October 2013.

A total of 51,065 of 71,393 available room nights sold in October 2014, compared to 53,205 of 74,369 of available room nights sold over the same period last year. Room rates were $118.98 during the month, compared to $106.89 last October.

At the same time, HANMI reported 83.13 percent occupancy among 11 member hotels for November 2014, a 2-percent increase compared to November 2013.

A total of 57,462 of 69,120 available room nights sold in November 2014, compared to 56,071 of 69,360 of available room nights sold over the same period last year. Room rates were $114.59 during the month, compared to $105.90 last November.

"Thanks to the commencement of flights by Jeju Air from Korea and the continued strong performance of China, we were able to maintain occupancy rates in October and November," said HANMI chair Nick Nishikawa. "We look forward to the restoration of direct charter flights from Russia in February to help ensure a healthy market mix of source countries for our local tourism economy."

So far this calendar year, hotel occupancy is at an average 82.13 percent, 1 percent lower than the same period last year.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands was established in 1985 as a professional forum for the hospitality industry of the Northern Mariana Islands. ***(HANMI)***

Guam law firm is disqualified as counsel for UMDA

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The federal court has granted David L. Wickline's motion to disqualify a Guam law firm from representing the United Micronesia Development Inc. in its lawsuit against him.

In an order on Friday, U.S. District Court for the NMI Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy ordered the law firm of Calvo Fisher & Jacob LLP to withdraw as counsel for UMDA.

Wickline is a former president and chief executive officer of UMDA.

Kennedy said because the law firm's former representations of Wickline are in large part related to the current case in which it represents a party adverse to him, the court must disqualify the law firm.

Kennedy ruled that Wickline has satisfied the court's strict judicial scrutiny.

"The court regrets the hardship this order will cause UMDA, which has the right to be represented by the lawyer of its choosing, but allowing Calvo Fisher to continue to take a stance adverse to their former client in a case with facts that overlap substantially with its former representation creates the appearance of impropriety, which the court cannot permit," Kennedy said.

In a statement, UMDA said the company will ask the court to reconsider its ruling.

"UMDA, as the court acknowledged, is greatly hampered with the court's ruling regarding disqualification of its counsel in the Wickline litigation," UMDA said.

UMDA said in its view, the ruling on the question of who is counsel for UMDA does not deter the company's mission to protect its shareholders from the former CEO's efforts to claim compensation not due to him, for his fiduciary breaches, and his efforts to gain for himself 25 percent of company shares (150,000 shares) equal to the holdings of the governments of the CNMI, Palau, and the FSM.

"While disappointing, the ruling only delays but does not deny the company's position to proceed to trial and protect the interests of hundreds of Micronesian shareholders from Mr. Wickline," UMDA said.

Last October, U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge Consuelo B. Marshall dismissed with prejudice UMDA's lawsuit against Wickline. Marshall dismissed UMDA's claims for declaratory relief, fraud, and wrongful dilution. Dismissed with prejudice means UMDA cannot re-open the claims.

In the same order, Marshall dismissed without prejudice UMDA's claims for breach of fiduciary duty, unjust enrichment, and injunctive relief. Dismissed without prejudice allows UMDA to re-file the case on those claims in the future.

UMDA then filed an amended complaint containing its claims for breach of fiduciary duty and unjust enrichment.

UMDA is suing Wickline "to protect its shareholders from dilution of their interests in the company, to recover substantial damages that UMDA discovered during the course of its investigation, and to stop Wickline from working behind the scene to undermine shareholder confidence."

Wickline is also suing UMDA, seeking monetary damages. The court consolidated the cases.

In its amended complaint, UMDA argues that it is entitled to relief because Wickline breached his duty of loyalty to the company while he was CEO, in part by spending "too much of his time to pursue his own personal business ventures rather than UMDA's business."

Wickline, through counsel Colin Thompson, moved to disqualify the Calvo Fisher law firm. He alleged that the law firm, which is representing him in other matters, has been using confidential information he had provided against him in order to further the UMDA litigation.

In her order, Kennedy said Calvo Fisher's former representations of Wickline are substantially related to the current lawsuits.

Kennedy said this case involves at least two former representations substantially related to the current litigation: the tax advice and the BayNorth matter.

Kennedy said Calvo Fisher provided Wickline tax advice for the same time period when Wickline allegedly failed to pay taxes on or otherwise establish the incentive stock option plan (ISOP).

Kennedy said the tax representation included tax returns for 2007-2010 and 2010 was the year that the ISOP was allegedly granted or rejected.

"Because Calvo Fisher represented Wickline with respect to the same relevant tax issues during the same time period, the court must find a substantial relationship between the firm's former representation of Wickline and its current representation against him," the judge said.

Presumably, Kennedy said, the time Wickline spent litigating against and negotiating with BayNorth would support UMDA's contention that Wickline breached his duty of loyalty to UMDA by paying it too little attention.

When Wickline's partner filed for bankruptcy, it triggered Wickline's personal guaranty to one of the partnership's creditors, BayNorth Capital. BayNorth sued Wickline, and Calvo Fisher represented him in the lawsuit in Utah.

Once again, Kenney said, the court must conclude that Calvo Fisher's representation of Wickline during part of the BayNorth litigation revealed information that is relevant to its current representation against him, and therefore substantially related.

UMDA argues that Wickline waived any conflict in this matter by waiting nine months after litigation began to bring his motion.

Kennedy disagreed.

Kennedy said Wickline's delay of nine months in filing his motion to disqualify does not indicate his intention to waive the conflict or obtain an unfair tactical advantage, and the prejudice to UMDA is not so great as to shadow these proceedings and estop Wickline from objecting to conflicted counsel.

Kennedy said Wickline communicated his conflict of concerns to Calvo Fisher before this lawsuit began.

Additionally, the judge said, it appears that the motion to disqualify may have been delayed by the parties' legitimate procedural wrangling in this case, rather than any effort to gain an unfair tactical advantage.

Finally, Kennedy said, while UMDA will regrettably face a setback in hiring a new counsel, the case is not so far advanced that the prejudice to UMDA outweighs the public's interest in "client confidence and the profession's institutional need to avoid even the appearance of a breach of confidence."

UMDA argues that the tax information it relied on in the first amended complaint was not privileged, and that it is therefore not breaching its duty of confidentiality to Wickline by using that information against him.

"That argument misses the point of the substantial relationship test," Kennedy said.

Kennedy said the appearance of impropriety, and the real risk that other confidential information could be used against Wickline, compels the court to disqualify the law firm.

Finally, Kennedy said, the court finds that the October 2009 conflict waiver, by its own plain language, has no application to this matter.

Kennedy said when the agreement was signed, Calvo Fisher represented UMDA against former officers and directors, and then-CEO Wickline in the BayNorth matter.

Kennedy said Calvo Fisher's representation of both UMDA and Wickline formally ceased in August 2010 when the law firm delivered termination notices to the parties.

Accordingly, she said, the conflict of waiver no longer applied because Calvo Fisher no longer continued to represent UMDA or Wickline—there could be no conflict.

Kennedy said even if the court construed the conflict waiver broadly, waiver would not apply here because it provided insufficient information for Wickline to give informed consent for the future conflict.

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BEFORE THE COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC UTLITIES COMMISSION

NOTICE OF SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission will conduct a special business meeting at 10a.m. on December 10, 2014 at the CPUC Conference Room, Suite 103, CDA Building, Beach Road, Oleai, to consider the following agenda. Public attendance is welcome. Reports and other documents relevant to the agenda will be available at the meeting for public inspection. Questions regarding the agenda should be referred to Ms. Rose Ada-Hocog, who serves as the Commission's administrative assistant at 670-989-1974.

AGENDA

1. **Administrative matters:**
   a. Call to order; approval of agenda; & determination of quorum
2. **CPUC-RFP-14-001: CPUC Expert Consultant Services**
3. **Public comments**

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

(This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD Funds.)

Governor Eloy S. Inos, Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofschneider, and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairwoman, Ms. Marcie M. Tomokane, wish to announce that its Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) for Program Year 2013 is available for review. Comments made by the general public should be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on December 22, 2014. Written comments must be submitted to the NMHC Office in Garapan, Saipan, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, or by contacting Ms. Jeannie P. Mafnas, Planner/Grant Writer, at 234-9447/7689.

The report will be submitted to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Honolulu Office, by December 31, 2014. The CAPER encompasses the performance assessment of all HUD-funded programs, administered by the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands

The report is available at the NMHC Central Office in Saipan and at the respective NMHC Field Offices in Rota and Tinian during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Marcie M. Tomokane
Chairwoman of the Board

Office of the Public Auditor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Website: http://opacnmi.com
1236 Yap Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL 2014 ELECTION CANDIDATES and POLITICAL PARTIES

Public Law 12-18, the "Northern Mariana Islands Election Reform Act of 2000" (the Act), requires all certified candidates to file a detailed campaign statement of account. This itemized Statement, prepared with the advice and co-signature of the candidate's treasurer, must show the specific source(s), name(s) of contributor(s), and amount(s) of contributions and expenses. The Office of the Public Auditor (OPA) is mandated by the Act to administer the filing of such Statements. Pursuant to the Act, failure to file a complete, signed, dated and verified statement by **December 24, 2014**, shall subject you to a fine of up to **$100 per day** for each day the Statement is late.

The "Campaign Statement of Account" form, suggested reports, and supporting schedules are available on OPA's website at www.opacnmi.com. Please note that filing of a "Campaign Statement of Account" form is **mandatory**.

The Act also requires that the Statement be verified under oath by the candidate/political party and the candidate's/political party's treasurer. Our office will provide free notary service to those who wish to avail themselves of this service. (Proper identification bearing both the photo and signature of the candidate and treasurer must be provided).

Notary Service Schedule:

Saipan:
Office of the Public Auditor
Monday through Friday
8am to 4:30pm

Rota:
Rota Mayor's Office (Conference Room)
Wednesday, December 17, 2014 – 9am to 4:30pm
Thursday, December 18, 2014 – 9am to 12:00pm

Tinian:
Tinian Mayor's Office (Conference Room)
Monday, December 15, 2014 – 8:30am to 4:30pm

JKPL pushing through with digital village

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

At the request of Gov. Eloy S. Inos, the Joeten Kiyu Public Library is pushing ahead with its state-of-the art digital village that will provide a 21st century technology and amphitheater for both the young and old to utilize.

JKPL executive director John Gonzales said the first draft of the building design has been expanded and they will be presenting the revised blueprint and the estimated project cost to Inos. He didn't specifically say when he would meet with the governor but it will be anytime soon.

"We're actually waiting to meet with the governor to present him the revised concept and the cost analysis of a modified version for a larger digital village complex and amphitheater center and we are waiting for that per his request," Gonzales said.

The project was originally planned to include an 85-seat amphitheater but this has been expanded to about three times the size to 250 seats that will be situated on both the first and second floors of the amphitheater.

The proposed digital village will also have its own multimedia center that will have rooms for radio, broadcasting, video production, audio and music recording that will provide the opportunities to nurture imaginative, innovative, and creative thinking.

"We should be meeting with him fairly soon, along with the library's board and myself, and we're very excited because it is a project he endorsed and supports 100 percent unconditionally and the possibilities of providing our community with multimedia access in line with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the U.S Congress' reauthorization of the Library State Technology Act to integrate 21st technology skills with traditional library practices and that is for the whole CNMI," Gonzales said.

He noted that the amphitheater could be used for conventions and meetings for any business or organization but they are targeting the Northern Marianas College and the Public School System as the primary beneficiaries.

According to Gonzales, the digital village will also have built-in solar panels on the rooftop as part of the library's cost saving strategies.

"This will target the community's innovative thinking so we can facilitate interactive 21st century learning," Gonzales said.

SSHS club to sell phone charms tomorrow at the Street Market

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Southern High School's Junior Achievement program, an entrepreneurship club that teaches the practical experience of running a business, will be selling phone charms at the Street Market this Thursday.

The club has named their product company "Pacific Bauble." According to adviser Jonathan Aguon, the club recently settled on phone charms as their competitive product for next year's JA competition against Kagman High School.

DENNIS B. CHAN
Members of the Saipan Southern High School's Junior Achievement program show off a sample of the phone charms that they will be selling at the Street Market this Thursday.

The students are now working on the marketing side of the competition, he said.

At yesterday's club meeting, students edited a commercial they shot for their phone charms.

"We practice our business skills, teamwork, preparation, and cooperation, and market strategies like targeting certain ages groups," said club president Yvonne Indalecio.

Since her time in the club, she has learned that social awareness is important because in business, "if you don't have a target demographic, you don't have a purpose."

She said that Commonwealth Development Authority's Carline Sablan has been instrumental in getting their club going. Indalecio said Sablan "broke it down for us" and made us ask, "Is our product realistic?"

"If you make it appeal to a certain group, you have a focus. With that focus, you make the product. If you're socially-aware, you can notice how some girls love pink things, love cute things…and go, 'Alright, I'll make a pink, cute product."

The charms they are selling this Thursday came out of that social awareness, she said. "Everyone has phones too," she said, and some people have earphone jacks that get "messed up" so charms can protect them.

"It's perfect," she added.

The charms are either rubber or metal and come in many different designs.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Judiciary Administrative Office
Guma' Hustisia · Iimwal Aweewe · House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165 · Saipan MP 96950
T: (670) 236-9715 · F: (670) 236-9702

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

DEPUTY CLERK I
Office of the Clerk of Court
Superior Court
SAIPAN

DUTIES: This position is under the general supervision of the Presiding Judge and the direct supervision of the Clerk of Court or his/her designee. The employee performs work in accordance with established policies, practices, and court procedures. The following are required duties:

- Receives, reviews, and records documents filed for hearings;
- Provides data entry of pleadings onto the court's case management system;
- Provides daily updates of pleadings and other caseload information for the assigned judge through the court's automated processes, including, but not limited to, the document imaging and online filing system;
- Assesses fines, receives and accounts for monies, issues receipts, prepares deposit slips and provides disbursements per court order or requests from customer service window;
- Prepares and maintains physical and electronic file folders for court cases, including tracking of all pleadings associated with individual cases files;
- Serves as a courtroom clerk when court hearings are in session, including, but not limited to, swearing in of witnesses, logging of all admitted exhibits, tracking all phases of a hearing on an index sheet for the recording counter, operating the electronic recording equipment, and providing continuous monitoring of the recording equipment to ensure the integrity of the record; and,
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: Must have a high school diploma or equivalent plus a minimum of three (3) years related work experience. There is a strong preference for those with work experience in the legal field and those with a Bachelor's Degree. Successful candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI.

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This is an ungraded position appointed and serves at the pleasure of the Presiding Judge. The salary will be $20,485 annually.

INTERESTED PERSONS may obtain application forms at OPM offices in the CNMI, the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Tinian and Rota. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

Michelle V. Guerrero
Human Resource/Administrative Officer
Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670)236-9818
Fax. (670) 236-9702
michelle.guerrero@justice.gov.mp

This job announcement will remain open until filled. Also, this job announcement can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at http://www.justice.gov.mp.

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

DEPUTY MARSHAL II
On the island of SAIPAN

DUTIES: The successful candidate will work under the Director of Law Enforcement and Security in the Marshal Service Division on Saipan which involves the enforcement and execution of judicial orders and assigned law enforcement duties. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to the following:

- Performs general court security duties, including providing safety and security during judicial proceedings, providing protection from harm and personal injury to assigned justices, judges, court personnel, clients, jurors and witnesses;
- Provide protection from damage and vandalism to the court facilities, equipment and other related resources;
- Assist with all necessary inspection and screening of persons and items entering the court facilities restricting from entry those that are prohibited within the court premises;
- Assists in transporting and escorting prisoners and other detainees who are awaiting court appearance. This includes transporting prisoners from the Department of Public Safety (or from other locations as instructed) to the courthouse and return; from the courthouse holding cells to the courtrooms and return, and other related work;
- Provide physical and electronic security monitoring of all assigned areas under the control of the Marshal Division;
- Assist in protecting and transporting (if necessary) jurors and other court personnel during jury trial and deliberation;
- Assist with court bailiff functions;
- Assist in the preparation of reports of service and no-service, including submission of daily activity and incident reports;
- Provides the general public with direction and general information on all judicial service locations with the courthouse;
- Attends and successfully completes all training courses as directed by the Director of Law Enforcement and Security, including but not limited to, any law enforcement officers training courses offered through the Northern Marians College;
- Assists the other Deputy Marshals in their duties; and
- Performs other duties on the courthouse premises as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: Candidate must have a high school diploma or any combination equivalent to graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree, plus a minimum of two (2) years experience in legal, law enforcement, court work or related field of study. Successful candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment.

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This is an ungraded position appointed and served at the pleasure of the Chief Justice. Salary will be $18,585 annually.

INTERESTED PERSONS may obtain application forms at the OPM offices in the CNMI, at the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Tinian and Rota. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

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THE CNMI JUDICIARY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

G*GAP concert yields $3.17K donation for NMPASI

Nippon General Trading Corp., which operates the Country House Restaurant, in collaboration with Hafadai Beach Hotel, donated proceeds from a two-night charity concert to tsunami victims in Japan and to the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc., more commonly known as NMPASI, a local non-profit organization that provides protection and advocacy services on behalf of individuals with disabilities—each receiving over $3,000 in cash donations.

The G*GAP Band is a premiere country western band from Japan that has been making an annual tour stop on Saipan for the last several years in support of the Nippon group's charity efforts.

Country House general manager Katsuko Kato said: "We've been donating money to off-island charities for the last several years. Last year we donated to charities on behalf of Japan and Oklahoma disaster victims, but this year we wanted to include a local beneficiary. We decided on NMPASI as a way to help individuals with disabilities."

NMPASI was founded in 1993 with a mission to protect the civil, legal and human interests of individuals with disabilities. Since its inception, NMPASI has provided assistance to thousands of local residents with disabilities in the form of:

(1) free legal services/representation to combat various forms of discrimination due to their disabilities;

(2) free outreach/training activities throughout the community (to include Tinian and Rota) on issues relating to the needs and rights of individuals with disabilities; and

(3) free advocacy services for the elderly who may not otherwise qualify under our disability-related programs.

NMPASI executive director Jim Rayphand said: "We're humbled that Mr. Sago (owner of Country House) and Kato would recognize NMPASI's efforts on behalf of people who have disabilities with such a generous donation… and the G*GAP concert was a blast to boot."

Other sponsors of the charity event(s) besides Country House Restaurant and Hafaadai Beach Hotel included: Delta Air Lines, KSPN 2, The Visitors Channel, Pacific Trading Co. Ltd., Certified Angus Beef, MarPac, Inc., and Gary Liddle. ***(NMPASI)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Country House HR manager Alexia D. Lisua, far left, hands over a cash donation to NMPASI executive director Jim Rayphand, second from left. Also in photo, NMPASI client advocate Cleo Nening and legal counsel Matt Holley outside the NMPASI office in Guala Rai.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NMPASI volunteer board member Robert Torres, third from left, back row, and NMPASI executive director Jim Rayphand, second from right, back row, pose for photo with Country House executives and G*GAP Band members during a concert intermission at Hafa Adai Beach Hotel.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

DEPUTY MARSHAL I
On the island of ROTA

DUTIES: The successful candidate will work under the Director of Law Enforcement and Safety in the Marshal Service Division on Saipan which involves the enforcement and execution of judicial orders and assigned law enforcement duties. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to the following:

- Performs enforcement and execution of court orders and service documents such as jury summons;
- Performs court security duties required for judicial proceedings, protection of justices, judges, court staff, clients, jurors, witnesses, and judicial facilities; assists in the operation of the court's security control monitoring systems;
- Conducts inspection and screening of all persons entering the courthouse and prohibits the entrance onto the court's premises of any items that are restricted or prohibited; provides the public with direction and information on all public services locations within the courthouse;
- Prepares written reports of service and non-service documents, incidents, and other reports as required;
- Performs prisoner handling while awaiting court hearings; escorts prisoners to courtrooms and to holding cells as directed;
- Has knowledge of and follows courtroom directives;
- Completes annually all required training including firearms; complies to all procedures relative to the proper use, maintenance, and security of government issued firearms;
- Performs other duties on the courthouse premises as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: Candidate must have a high school diploma or equivalent, a minimum of two (2) years experience in law enforcement and/or one year college level education in criminal justice or related field of study. Successful candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment.

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This is an ungraded position appointed and served at the pleasure of the Chief Justice. Salary will be $16,652 annually.

INTERESTED PERSONS may obtain application forms at the OPM offices in the CNMI, at the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Tinian and Rota. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

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DEPUTY MARSHAL I
On the island of SAIPAN

DUTIES: The successful candidate will work under the Director of Law Enforcement and Safety in the Marshal Service Division on Saipan which involves the enforcement and execution of judicial orders and assigned law enforcement duties. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to the following:

- Performs enforcement and execution of court orders and service documents such as jury summons;
- Performs court security duties required for judicial proceedings, protection of justices, judges, court staff, clients, jurors, witnesses, and judicial facilities; assists in the operation of the court's security control monitoring systems;
- Conducts inspection and screening of all persons entering the courthouse and prohibits the entrance onto the court's premises of any items that are restricted or prohibited; provides the public with direction and information on all public services locations within the courthouse;
- Prepares written reports of service and non-service documents, incidents, and other reports as required;
- Performs prisoner handling while awaiting court hearings; escorts prisoners to courtrooms and to holding cells as directed;
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THE CNMI JUDICIARY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

USS *Fort Worth* to make its first visit to Guam

SANTA RITA, Guam—USS *Fort Worth* will make its first visit to Guam tomorrow, Dec. 11, during its maiden 16-month rotational deployment in support of the Indo-Asia-Pacific rebalance.

Building on USS *Freedom*'s inaugural 10-month deployment from March to December 2013, *Fort Worth* will expand LCS operations in the region to include visiting more ports, engaging regional navies during exercises like Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training and expanding LCS capabilities with tools like the MQ-8B Fire Scout unmanned autonomous helicopter.

In addition to presence in nearly every phase of CARAT 2015 in South and Southeast Asia, *Fort Worth* will train with the Republic of Korea Navy in Exercise Foal Eagle and will join multinational ships at Singapore's Changi Naval Base for the International Maritime Defense Exhibition. *Fort Worth* will also expand LCS regional presence by using additional expeditionary maintenance locations in Northeast Asia.

Fast, agile and mission-focused, littoral combat ships are designed to operate in near-shore environments and employ modular mission packages that can be configured for surface warfare, mine countermeasures or anti-submarine warfare. *Fort Worth* will employ the surface warfare mission package for her entire deployment, augmenting her 57mm gun and rolling airframe missile launcher with two 30mm guns, two 11-meter rigid-hull inflatable boats and two eight-member maritime security boarding teams. With more fuel capacity than *Freedom*, *Fort Worth* can refuel less often and stay on patrol. ***(PR)***

Bordallo returns from CODEL in the Middle East

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo and members of a congressional delegation meet with Afghan CEO Abdullah Abdullah, during a visit to Afganistan. From left, Rep. Reid Ribble (WI-08), Rep. Dave Loebsack (IA-02), Rep. Rob Wittman (VA-01), Abdullah, Bordallo, Rep. Mike Coffman (CO-06), Rep. Bill Flores (TX-17), and embassy staff.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo recently returned from a congressional delegation to Qatar, Afghanistan, and Jordan. The CODEL, led by Rep. Rob Wittman of Virginia, Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, met with key government officials and military leaders to discuss matters regarding U.S. operations against ISIL and counter-terrorism initiatives in the Middle East. The celegation also included Reps. Dave Loebsack of Iowa, Mike Coffman of Colorado, Bill Flores of Texas, and Reid Ribble of Wisconsin.

In Afghanistan, the delegation met with President Ashraf Ghani and chief executive officer Abdullah Abdullah to discuss the bilateral security agreement between the United States and Afghanistan, which recently passed the Afghan National Assembly's House of the People. The delegation also met with U.S. servicemembers stationed in Qatar and had an audience with King Abdullah II ibn al-Hussein of Jordan.

"I appreciated the opportunity to meet with Afghan President Ghani and CEO Abdullah to discuss the bilateral security agreement that recently passed Afghanistan's National Assembly's lower house," said Bordallo. "Our delegation was the first from the U.S. House of Representatives to meet with Afghanistan's new leaders following elections earlier this year. This [congressional delegation] also gave us an opportunity to see firsthand and discuss directly with our military leaders on the ground the progress being made to combat ISIL. I thank Chairman Wittman for organizing this [delegation], and I look forward to working with him my colleagues on HASC to support our military operations in the Middle East and around the world." ***(PR)***

10-year accord targets sustainable, inclusive growth for Pacific Islands

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—With poverty and inequality, slow economic growth, food security and youth unemployment remaining major challenges for the Pacific Islands, the New Zealand government and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community have signed a 10-year pact to boost development outcomes in the region.

Under their strategic *Partnership Arrangement 2014-2024,* the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and SPC will work closer than ever before in their 67-year history to drive on-ground initiatives and share expertise and resources to support a sustainable future for Pacific Islands people.

The arrangement was formalized in Auckland yesterday by the MFAT Deputy Secretary for International Development, Craig Hawke, and SPC Director-General Dr. Colin Tukuitonga at a reception hosted by the Ambassador for Pacific Economic Development, Shane Jones.

Tukuitonga welcomed the strengthened partnership, saying it gives SPC more certainty to pursue ambitious, lasting programs aimed at addressing serious development issues in the Pacific.

"This arrangement marks a new era of more strategic collaboration between SPC and New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade which will extend to leveraging New Zealand's whole-of-government expertise, including scientific agencies," Tukuitonga said.

"As the International Year of Small Island Developing States draws to a close, we can reflect on the mixed progress on measures of human and social development among Pacific Island countries and territories and be reminded that supporting sustainable growth in the Pacific is a marathon, not a sprint.

"We're deeply grateful for the support SPC receives through the New Zealand Aid Programme and for the ability this new arrangement gives us to collaborate with New Zealand on a multisectoral approach and with more predictable funding, rather than working project-by-project," he said.

New Zealand currently funds services to Pacific Island countries and territories in areas including fisheries, agriculture, statistics, geoscience and public health as well as study exchanges within the Pacific.

For example, this support for SPC has resulted in better preparedness among Pacific Island governments and health professionals to cope with epidemics and emerging diseases like chikungunya, dengue and Zika with the introduction of online disease alerts on an interactive map: www.spc.int/phd/epidemics.

Over 100 people attended the reception, staged by Ambassador Jones to mark the partnership between New Zealand and the Pacific community and underline the vital nature of its support for Pacific people.

High-level consultations between MFAT and SPC will occur annually, with the first talks set for this week due to also include other ministries and research institutes. ***(SPC)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

December 10, 2002

'No major injuries, casualties'

No major injuries or casualties in the CNMI were reported as a result of supertyphoon Pongsona, which hit the islands over the weekend, authorities said. "That's the situation right now. We've got no reports of major injuries or casualties," said Public Health Secretary James U. Hofschneider yesterday. "We would know more in the next few days." There were also no reports of any typhoon-related illnesses or problems such as water contamination. In related news, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. said there was no substantial damage to facilities on Saipan and Tinian as of yesterday. "There's no major damage reported, but CUC personnel are still in the field assessing the situation," said CUC board chairman Frank Guerrero.

CUC seeks $1.5M for EPA-required project

With an Environmental Protection Agency deadline clawing at its back, the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is seeking relief from the Executive Branch and the Legislature to identify sources for some $1.5 million additional funding needed to start the construction of the Agingan wastewater ocean outfall. CUC executive director Lorraine A. Babauta said the sewer treatment project costs at least $2.8 million—based on the lowest bidder's estimate—but only $750,000 has been made available by the EPA, and some $1 million would be produced by the utility firm. "We're requesting their assistance in identifying money for the Agingan outfall," she said.

December 10, 2007

Man pleads guilty to assaulting park ranger

A man who was accused of assaulting a park ranger at the Outer Cove Marina area entered a guilty plea yesterday in federal court. Prisco Ongrung, 35, also known as Prisco Omgrung, pleaded guilty to the lesser offense of assault on a federal officer. U.S. District Court Chief Judge Alex R. Munson accepted Ongrung's plea and set the sentencing for March 18, 2008. Ongrung and his lawyer, Kelley Butcher, signed a plea agreement with the U.S. government. According to the plea agreement, on Sept. 12, 2007, the defendant struck Samuel Matinsen, a law enforcement park ranger of the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, in the head.

Teen arrested for alleged threat vs uncle

A teenager was arrested for allegedly repeatedly threatening to kill his uncle in Kagman 2 on Friday. Vicente Artago Iriarte, 19, was arrested for disturbing the peace and assault. Iriarte was brought to the Superior Court yesterday morning for a bail hearing. Associate Judge Juan T. Lizama imposed a $1,000 cash bail for the defendant's temporary liberty and set the preliminary hearing for Dec. 20. Detective Simon T. Manacop stated in his report that a police officer was dispatched to the residence of Joseph Mettao in Kagman 2 after Mettao reported a disturbance. Manacop said Mettao told the responding police officer that his nephew, Iriarte, has been threatening to kill him.

December 10, 2008

Board instructs PSS to pay CUC $200K

The Public School System is planning to pay the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. $200,000 in an effort to keep the utility agency from disconnecting their power. PSS owes approximately $1.3 million in past utility fees. In a statement, Gov. Benigno Fitial urged CUC executive director Antonio Muña to pursue all past due accounts. During Board of Education committee meetings yesterday, the board directed Education Commissioner Rita Sablan to use the approximately $200,000 left over from the budget to cover the past payments, BOE chair Lucy Blanco-Maratita said.

Tinian to have base—eventually

As part of the Guam military buildup, Tinian will eventually have a military base, the director of the Joint Guam Program Office recently said. The base is several years in the making and the timeline has yet to be finalized, but the island will eventually be home to a warm base, where the Marines will stay during training sessions and then leave, JGPO director David Bice said. The base would include barracks and a dining hall with civilian employees. Under the proposed Guam military buildup, approximately 8,000 U.S. Marines and 9,000 dependents will be transferred from Okinawa, Japan, to Guam. Construction of new defense facilities is slated to start in 2010, with the relocation to be completed in 2014.

Case sent back for resentencing

The Commonwealth Supreme Court recently returned a case to the trial court for resentencing. In the case, the defendant, Matias Salasiban, made several claims. But the high court only decided one: Whether it was an error to sentence Salasiban without the benefit of a presentence investigation and report, or PSI.

Before sentencing, a trial court must order a PSI except in two circumstances. Those circumstances are when the defendant waives—with the court's permission—the right to a PSI, and when the court finds and explains why the record is already sufficient to enable meaningful sentencing discretion. Those exceptions were not satisfied. Salasiban and the court did not discuss ordering a PSI. That silence meant the trial court neither gave the defendant permission to waive the PSI (exception 1), nor explained why it was unnecessary (exception 2).

Normally that would be enough for reversal. But Salasiban did not make his PSI claim at the trial level. Because of that, he needed to meet a higher standard called plain error. That standard was met because not ordering the PSI resulted in Salasiban receiving a sentence twice as long as the statutory maximum for the crime he committed.

The Supreme Court's full opinion is *Commonwealth v. Salasiban*, 2014 MP 17, and can be found at http://www.cnmilaw.org/supreme14.html. ***(NMI Judiciary)***

THE ART SCENE

FOA to host 'A Glee-ful Christmas Revue'

The Friends of the Arts will be holding its first program of this season, *A Glee-ful Christmas Revue*, an evening of Christmas music performed by the award winning Rhythm n' Harmony, the Marianas High School Glee Club, directed by Paul Dujua and produced by Harold Easton. The program will have three performances on Dec. 12 and 13 starting at 7pm and a 3pm matinee on Dec. 14. All three shows will be at the Marianas High School's Dolphin Theatre.

The entrance fee will be $5 for all student Thespian members, $8 for students up through college, $12 for FOA members and $15 for non-FOA members. All MHS students will be offered the $5 ticket price and all MHS staff will be offered the $12 member rate. Season ticket holders and their guests (one guest per season ticket) are already prepaid. This program will help fund the Glee Club's trip to Guam next spring to participate in the Tumon Bay Music Festival. ***(PR)***

Glushko's Academy sets 'Christmas Concert'

Glushko's Academy of Performing Arts will be hosting a Christmas Concert on Dec. 14, Sunday, at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center. Show time is from 6pm to 7pm. Doors will be open at 5:30pm. Tickets, at only $10 for adults and $5 for children (3-12 years old), are available at the door or by calling 483-6271 or email glushkosacademy@yahoo.com. The concert, which will feature dances and music from your favorite Christmas carols, is a fundraising event is to raise money for the March 2015 International Ballet of Stars.

Saipan Pacific Winds, Manta Band sets Dec. show

Saipan Pacific Winds and the Saipan Southern High School's Manta Ray Band will be doing a show on Dec. 22, 2014, starting at 7pm at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. There will be more details emerging next week as we develop the program. There will be no admission fee but donations are encouraged as the band fundraises for their competition tour to Los Angeles in June 2015 at Walt Disney Hall, home of the LA Philharmonic. A portion of the donations will be donated to a charity to be named soon. ***(PR)***

UOG Art and Theater Departments hosts design and art show

UOG students in two different fall 2014 Art classes, Basic Design and Studio for Non-Art Majors, will present more than 60 pieces of art in a public showcase, "Not a Blank Page": Design and Art Studio–Final Student Art Show, which will be held at Guma Tasa in Mangilao from Dec. 11 to 19. The event opens on Thursday, Dec. 11, and will feature a special presentation of original theatrical works from actors in the UOG Fall 2014 Acting I class. "Not a Blank Page": Design and Art Studio–Final Student Art Show is open to the public and admission is free of charge. For more information, contact Tali Ariav at talariav@hotmail.com. ***(UOG)***

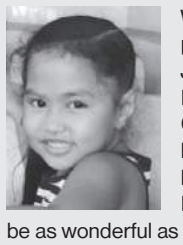
BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

Happy birthday Jalena Camacho Cepeda! May God bless you on your special day and shower you with many more years and blessings to come. We love you! Love, Auntie Kim, Uncle Eric, and Izaiah Blaze.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happiest of birthday greetings going out to the awesomely great and wonderful Rose Nelly Ada-Hocog, who celebrates her birthday today, Dec. 10! May you have a blessed and fabulous one with many more birthdays to come. Here's to hoping all your birthday dreams and wishes come true! Happy birthday and happy holidays to you and yours. Thank you for all that you do for our island community! Much love always from all your family and friends near and far.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Wishing our princess, Jelena Raeko C. Cepeda, a happy 6th birthday! May your day be as wonderful as you are! You are a true blessing and we are forever grateful for having you in our lives. We love you to infinity and beyond! Greetings come from Dad, Mom and Kaiden.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

LAW OFFICES OF S. JOSHUA BERGER
D' TORRES BUILDING. GARAPAN
P.O. Box 504340
SAIPAN, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 235-8060 Fax: 235-8070

Attorney for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

ISLA FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.,	)	CIVIL ACTION
	)	NO.: 14-0206
Plaintiff,	)	
v.	)	
	)	SUMMONS
FRANCES C. QUICHOCHO	)	(For Publication)
	)	
Defendant.	)	

TO: FRANCES C. QUICHOCHO

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file with the Superior Court any Answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is given to you herewith, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication, and to deliver or mail a copy of your Answer to the Law Offices of S. Joshua Berger, Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Second Floor, D'Torres Building, Garapan, P. O. Box 504340, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your Answer.

Your Answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

By Order of the above Court:

DATED: November 18, 2014

/s/ Adelpha Kapileo
CLERK OF COURT

First Publication

Daniel T. Guidotti
MARIANAS PACIFIC LAW LLC
2nd Floor, J.E. Tenorio Building
Middle Road, Gualo Rai
P.O. Box 506057
SAIPAN, MP 96950
TEL: (670) 233-0777
FAX: (670) 233-0776

Court-appointed Trustee

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

CHO, SEONG JEO,	)	**CIVIL ACTION**
	)	**NO. 13-0161**
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
-v-	)	
	)	
PARK JAE HYUN, et al.	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Commonwealth Superior Court will hold a hearing to determine claims to surplus funds delivered to the Court arising out of foreclosure of Tract No. H 246 in the above-captioned matter. On September 14, 2014, the Court appointed the Trustee of record, Daniel T. Guidotti of Marianas Pacific Law LLC, whose mailing address is P.O. Box 506057, Saipan, MP 96950 to assist the Court with determining entitlement to the surplus funds.

The hearing in this matter is set for **February 10, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.** in courtroom 220 of the Superior Court, Susupe, Saipan.

All persons having claims to these should file their claims with the Trustee and the Superior Court as soon as possible, but in any event, no later than December 31, 2015.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Judiciary Administrative Office
Guma' Hustisia · Iimwal Aweewe · House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165 · Saipan MP 96950
T: (670) 236-9715 · F: (670) 236-9702

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

PROBATION OFFICER I

DUTIES: The successful candidate will work under the Chief Probation Officer in the Office of Adult Probation on Saipan which involves investigating, monitoring and/or supervising various levels and types of offenders' court ordered probation. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to the following:

- Performs all assigned duties relating to probationers' cases scheduled for court hearings;
- Investigates thoroughly offenders' personal history, background and environment;
- Gathers and evaluates data pertinent to individual cases from resource areas like the offenders' home, school, church, social agencies, neighborhood contacts, etc.
- Conducts interviews with probationers according to approved techniques in order to determine and clarify probationers' problems, and consulting with the supervisor as necessary, suggests constructive methods for dealing with such problems;
- Contacts public and private community agencies to secure their aid in solving probationers' problems. Maintains a continuing and ongoing relationship with the agencies as necessary;
- Documents facts and testifies in Court with respect to the Probationers' activities, behavior, and quality of adjustment while under supervision;
- Appears in Court for the purpose of providing testimony on Probation cases;
- Enforces Court Orders involving Probation cases;
- Attends public relations activities, conferences and field visits in connection with investigation and supervision functions; and
- Performs other law enforcement and public safety related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: Candidate must have a high school diploma or equivalent and have obtained a bachelors degree from a recognized college or university. Have three (3) years experience in legal, law enforcement and/or court work. Successful candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment.

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This position is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Presiding Judge. Salary will be $20,485 annually.

INTERESTED PERSONS may obtain application forms at the OPM offices in the CNMI, at the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Tinian and Rota. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

Michelle V. Guerrero
Human Resource/Administrative Officer
Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670)236-9818
Fax. (670) 236-9702
michelle.guerrero@justice.gov.mp

This job announcement will remain open until filled. Also, this job announcement can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at http://www.justice.gov.mp.

THE CNMI JUDICIARY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 14-050

Opening Date: December 10, 2014
Closing Date: December 23, 2014

Public Information & Community Relations Officer

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Executive Director or designee. Serves as a liaison between CUC, the media and the public; plans, coordinates and disseminates public information utilizing various forms of communication in an effort to educate and promote the organization's projects and activities. Prepares copy for news releases; content for the CUC website; articles; newsletters; reports and creates various collateral materials. Develops and coordinates public outreach programs; researches and identifies outreach needs and recommends communication methods for the provision of information. Receives and responds to inquiries from the public, internal departments, and other agencies; may serve as representative at public meetings to address questions or issues, and to provide community updates. Designs and implements public information campaigns, events and programs; determines campaign or program goals and expected outcomes; plans, coordinates and prepares materials and activities to meet goals and objectives. Researches, gathers and maintains information and communication materials and archives. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION: Executive Director's Office, **Saipan,** Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $42,411.00 per annum to $57,255.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): One (1)

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Journalism, Public Administration or related field and 4 years of related public information experience. Proficiency in multiple languages is a plus. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Public relations principles and techniques; Communication methods; Media relations principles; Customer relations principles; Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Serving as a public information liaison and representative to the community; Planning, coordinating and disseminating public information; Determining information needs and promoting and educating the public; Preparing news releases, communications content, articles and collateral materials; Listening and responding to inquiries and effectively conveying information; Utilizing critical thinking and social perception to identify issues; Researching and preparing recommendations and responses; Designing and implementing programs and events; Measuring effectiveness of program delivery for future enhancements; Gathering and maintaining communication materials and information; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

Drop off your CUC Employment Application at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration Office.

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER
The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Takata non grata

In May 2009, days after graduating from high school in Oklahoma, Ashley Parham got into a fender bender. Her 2001 Honda Accord tapped another vehicle and...boom: The driver-side air bag exploded, shooting metal shrapnel into Parham's neck. When police arrived, according to Reuters, they wondered if she'd been shot. Parham bled to death.

The air bag manufacturer, Takata Corp., already knew it had quality problems because a recall was underway for some Honda vehicles with Takata air bags. The two companies expanded the recall to include the type of vehicle Parham drove.

More than five years later, you'd think Takata air bags would be the most trusted on the roads. A safety equipment manufacturer couldn't expect to survive if its product sometimes blew up and killed and injured people, right?

Not true. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration ordered a national recall of millions of Takata air bags. Last week, Takata rejected that broad recall, even in the face of potentially huge fines from the NHTSA.

It's time for the slow-moving NHTSA to act on penalties, and for automakers who sell in the U.S. to make clear that Takata's business will be unwelcome here if it doesn't comply.

At least five deaths and 160 or more injuries have been blamed on faulty Takata air bags. Takata has recalled millions of vehicles in the U.S. and around the world, but it still can't fully explain why its air bags sometimes lethally misfire.

A Takata executive, Hiroshi Shimizu, told a U.S. House committee this week that only so many air bag replacement kits can be made each month, so the smart approach is to limit the recall to about 8 million vehicles in regions of the country where high heat and humidity could affect the propellent system. Takata has a recall underway in Florida, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Takata says it has a handle on previous manufacturing problems and believes the biggest risk now is to older model vehicles driven in those high-humidity areas. Something about those conditions degrades the propellent system, allowing internal pressure to build, the company says.

NHTSA officials say, though, that evidence shows the problem is not limited to those areas. Regulators are aware of at least two recent driver's side air bag malfunctions in North Carolina and California, outside the recall zone.

No one has yet explained with confidence what goes wrong. Takata has had trouble for years with passenger and driver-side airbags, with its manufacturing process and the propellent. Sloppy record-keeping has been a problem. This company has lost public trust.

Honda and Toyota announced broader recalls of their own vehicles this week. Some other manufacturers have been hanging back.

A national recall is an enormous and costly undertaking, but it can't measure against the human toll of death and injury. Takata should comply with the NHTSA order or take its business elsewhere.

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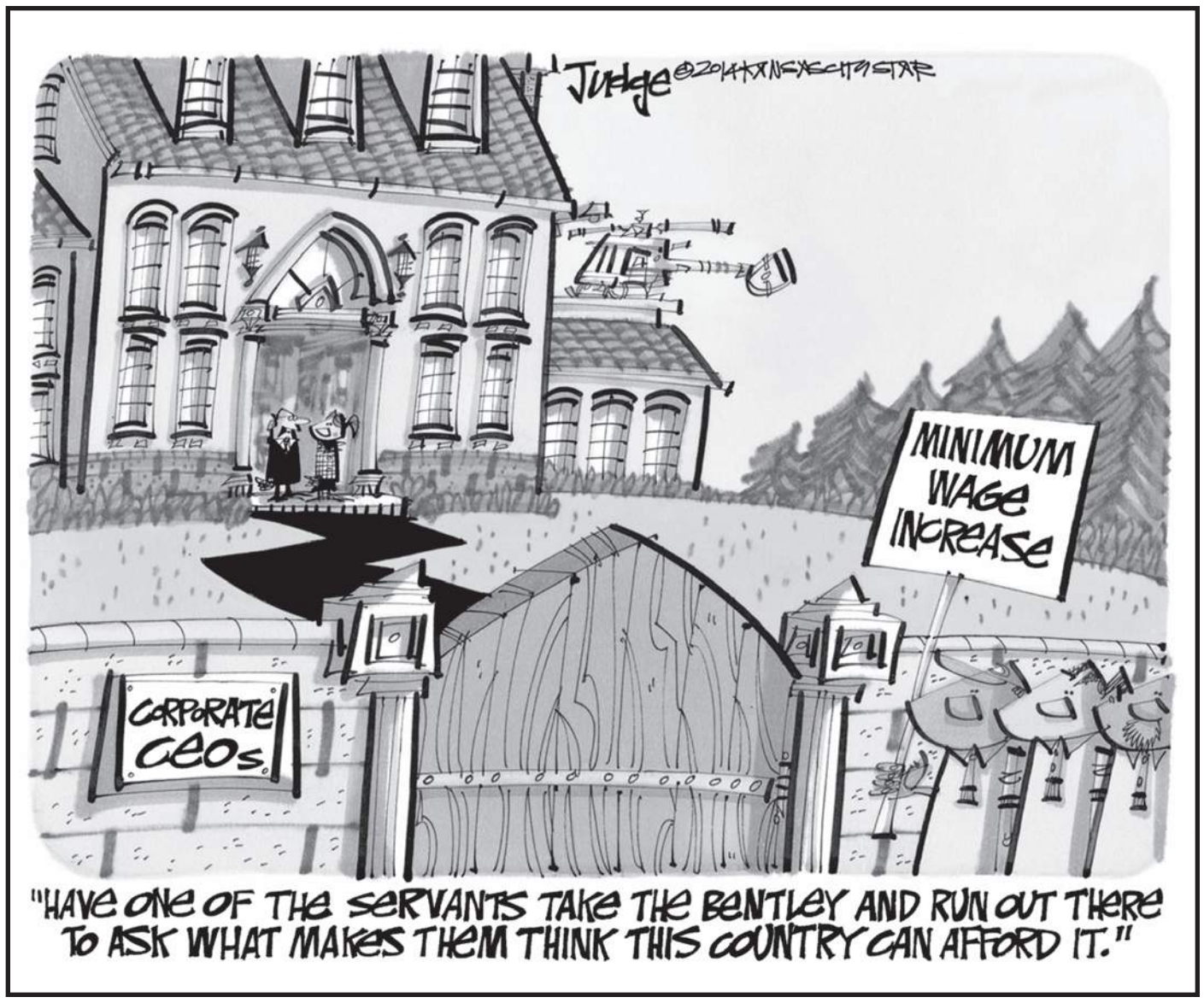

Judge
MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE
CORPORATE CEOs
"HAVE ONE OF THE SERVANTS TAKE THE BENTLEY AND RUN OUT THERE TO ASK WHAT MAKES THEM THINK THIS COUNTRY CAN AFFORD IT."

What constitutes cruel and unusual punishment?

By ROBERT SMITH and G. BEN COHEN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Should a fisherman face two decades in prison for discarding a few fish at sea? That question is at the core of a statutory interpretation case the Supreme Court heard in November, but it also raises another question: What does "cruel and unusual punishment" mean today?

When a Florida fish and wildlife officer boarded John Yates' fishing boat, he found a number of fish too small to be legally caught. Before reaching land, Yates discarded three of the fish. To punish him, federal prosecutors used a white-collar crime statute criminalizing the destruction of "any record, document or tangible object" intended to obstruct a federal investigation.

During oral arguments, Justice Antonin Scalia observed that Yates could have received 20 years and asked the prosecutor: "What kind of sensible prosecution is that?" The lawyer for the government responded that federal prosecutors often do not prosecute such offenses, but when they do they pursue "the offense that's the most severe under the law." Scalia retorted: "If that's going to be the Justice Department's position, then we're going to have to be much more careful about how extensive statutes are."

Amen to that. The courts should be much more careful.

Yates received a 30-day prison sentence but is appealing his conviction, claiming that the law known as Sarbanes-Oxley is intended to cover shredded documents, not dead fish. To address Scalia's question, though, a 20-year sentence for throwing three fish into the ocean would be cruel and unusual.

The judiciary needs to vigorously guard against statutes that allow excessive punishment. Our legislators are human. They read the news. They are subject to the same vulnerabilities and weaknesses as the rest of us. Our criminal penalties too often reflect the fear and anger triggered by some salient event, not a cold and sober calculus about what harm was caused or what deterrent is necessary.

The problem is that once crime-fighting legislation is passed, it is very difficult to undo. General societal anxiety around crime means that candidates rarely propose reducing criminal sanctions when they are running for office. As Justice Stephen G. Breyer puts the point, politicians "were in the popular club in high school" and they know how to "hold their finger up to the wind to measure popularity."

Given the stickiness of criminal statutes, the responsibility of the judiciary is to question whether Americans would tolerate the punishment if it were applied routinely to everyone who commits the offense. Any punishment that is tolerated only because it is applied infrequently and unevenly is not one that the 8th Amendment tolerates.

The Supreme Court's current approach to 8th Amendment claims is needlessly obtuse—and results in too little judicial intervention into punishment practices.

This argument is not limited to fishermen who throw grouper back into the ocean. Draconian punishments are repeatedly given for nonviolent drug offenses. For instance, a man in Slidell, La., received a life sentence in 2011 for possessing marijuana for the fourth time. There is a nearby area in New Orleans where twentysomethings often possess marijuana and, no doubt, could have been convicted multiple times. We call that drug-ridden neighborhood Uptown, and its population includes Tulane University students, some of whom are the sons and daughters of Louisiana's wealthiest residents.

It does not take much reflection to absorb the reality that interminable prison sentences for nonviolent marijuana offenses or death sentences for homicides would not be tolerated if they were applied consistently and evenly to anyone—white or black, rich or poor. Most of the people serving excessive prison sentences are among the nation's poorest and least influential citizens. No powerful lobby presses their plight. And often the loss of franchise is a cost of their incarceration. Nobody stands up to protect them.

While the criminalization of marijuana possession may have the broadest impact, the haphazard application of the death penalty makes the deepest cut. A majority of states have abandoned the death penalty in law or in practice. Eighteen states have legislatively abolished the death penalty. An additional six states have either not imposed an execution or not sentenced anyone to death in a decade. The governors of Washington and Oregon have declared formal moratoriums on executions. And most Americans live in a place where no one has been sentenced to death in years.

We live in a nation that incarcerates a larger percentage of its population than any other industrialized nation on Earth. We have emptied our public hospitals, mental health wards and drug treatment facilities, and filled up our prisons. We treat people who commit crimes with a brutality that would be incomprehensible if the people who suffered under the burden of this system were the loved ones of the people who make and enforce our laws.

This is a judicial failure. If a punishment wouldn't be tolerated if applied regularly and evenly, then the power and responsibility to ensure that it is not imposed at all rests with the courts.

Robert Smith is an assistant professor of law at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. G. Ben Cohen is an attorney with the Promise of Justice Initiative in New Orleans. They wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The Ferguson controversy

We may be victims of paralysis from over-analysis of the grand jury's decision against indicting a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, who shot and killed a black kid. The Great Talker-In-Chief (Obama), as usual, vacillated and wasn't of much help to instill calm. But it's good to see from the prism of a black reporter what he had to endure for his pigmentation. Here's his essay.

What it felt like to be a 'suspicious' black teenager

Ferguson reminds a Journal reporter of times in his youth when he was singled out by police

By GARY FIELDS,
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

As one of the few black male reporters at *The Journal*, I've had experiences over the years that are unknown among my white colleagues, though anything but unique among other black men. We've all had our encounters; we've all been in situations where being black becomes synonymous with being suspicious, where demanding rights and respectful treatment can be seen as resisting law enforcement.

So after the grand jury's decision on Monday not to indict police officer Darren Wilson in the shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., I found myself thinking back on episodes in my own life. My first thought was: What's the difference between a 6-foot-3-inch, 230-pound, black 17-year-old and a 40ish, 5-foot-6-inch black man? Depending on the circumstances, I knew, not much.

It was the late 1970s, and I was that large, 17-year-old, high school kid—getting good grades and college-bound. I was walking home from Bowlero, a bowling alley in Alexandria, La., on a beautiful Saturday afternoon. I was carrying my bowling bag, complete with a 16-pound ball, shoes and a towel.

I noticed police cars speeding around. Several passed before a Louisiana state trooper stopped. He told me to be careful: There had been a fatal shooting in my neighborhood, and the suspect—a 5-foot-6-inch black man—had escaped on a bicycle.

I walked on until I heard a screech of brakes and looked back. A Rapides Parish sheriff's deputy—Louisiana has parishes, not counties—got out, crouched behind his car door and pointed his .357-Magnum at me over the top of the door. When you're on the wrong end of it, the barrel of a .357 looks exactly like a tunnel to eternity.

I knew a few things instinctively: Don't run, don't move, don't argue, and above all, don't ask why I'd been stopped. *Stay calm to live,* I thought. The cop had the gun, but it was *my* responsibility not to do anything to push him to use lethal force against me.

"Turn around real slow," he said. That's just what I did. I asked if it was OK to put down the bowling bag, slowly. I knew I had to do everything I could not to create any fear in the officer. Dead but innocent is still dead.

I said little, even as the deputy pushed me down on the hood of his car and handcuffed me.

I was saved when the state trooper who had first stopped me drove back by. He ripped into the deputy, asking him questions, and I answered—which, in another situation, could have been a comedy routine. Does this kid look 5-6? I answered, *I'm 6-3.* Does this kid look 40? *I'm 17.* Does this kid look 150 pounds? *I'm 230.*

The trooper ran through several descriptors for the suspect. I matched just one of them. I asked, "Outside of the basic black, is there any part of the description I fit?"

"Don't get smart, boy," the deputy hollered. But the trooper, who also was white, ended the discussion. He was livid. I thank God for him.

Years later, there is still no doubt in my mind that if I had moved in any way that frightened or angered the deputy, he would have shot me, and a reason would have been found to justify it.

As a teenager, there were other times when I was seen as "suspicious." Once, a store manager hid outside the supply freezers at a fast-food restaurant where I worked. At first, I thought he was playing a prank to scare me; only later did I learn that he suspected the black employees of stealing boxes of hamburger patties. In fact, the kids from affluent white families were taking the burgers and having cookouts with their friends. I wasn't one of the invitees. My future was worth more to me than a box of hamburger meat—even when I was a teenager.

By JOHN DELROSARIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

I found myself a target of suspicion on other occasions too. At the state junior bowling tournament in Baton Rouge in 1979, a group of my teammates set about trashing the hotel—drinking, shouting and running the halls. I knew beforehand that they were likely to misbehave, so I got a room to myself on the other side of the hotel.

But that didn't stop hotel security, accompanied by a city police officer, from coming to my room first. They flashed their badges and entered, only to see textbooks laid out on the bed. I was studying for tests on Monday. I was the only minority kid on the team. To my knowledge, none of my teammates got the same official attention.

As a teenager, I could be a doofus, but I knew even then that my margin for error was nonexistent compared with that of my friends and co-workers. On a perfectly beautiful day, I could be suspicious enough to a police officer that I would end up on the wrong end of a gun barrel.

For many black men in America, that margin of error has not improved. I don't condone the rioting in Ferguson, but it might help if the rest of the country had some small sense of the frustration and anger that this situation continues to cause.

Grand jury result in Ferguson was just

A friend emailed last week with a question: "You said that you were reserving your (Ferguson) opinion until you read the evidence. What do you say now?"

Fair enough. In an Aug. 31 column I wrote:

"If there is so much we don't know, why are so many committed to a particular outcome? ... The only thing anyone should desire at this time is a full accounting of what occurred—not that the officer be charged and convicted, nor that he be exonerated."

Now, having immersed myself in the evidence presented to the grand jury, I've concluded that while the process investigating the shooting death of 18-year-old Michael Brown was imperfect, the result was nonetheless just.

First, prosecutor Robert McCullough was in a no-win position. He didn't think there was probable cause to arrest Officer Darren Wilson, but recognized the community would not accept his unilateral decision after questions had been raised about his affinity for law enforcement. That's why he turned to a grand jury, or as veteran criminal defense attorney Mark O'Mara described it to me, a "super" grand jury, where he presented all evidence without any recommendation. The net effect was a trial with little to no cross-examination.

Many have criticized this process. Jeffrey Toobin, writing in the *New Yorker*, remarked:

"By submitting all the evidence to the grand jury, he added to the perception that this process represented an independent evaluation of the evidence. But there is little doubt that he remained largely in control of the process; aggressive advocacy by prosecutors could have persuaded the grand jurors to vote for some kind of indictment."

At *National Review*, Rich Lowry saw it differently:

"It's unusual, yes, but not unheard of for prosecutors to present a case to a grand jury without a recommendation to indict. Regardless, who could really object to a grand jury hearing everything in such a sensitive case? If any of the evidence were excluded that, surely, would have been the basis of other howls of an intolerably stacked deck."

Another unconventional aspect of this grand jury was that Wilson testified for 90 minutes without once asserting his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Experienced criminal lawyers will tell you this is unheard of and might dramatically confirm that Wilson knew he had nothing to hide. His account was consistent with his prior statements and plausible—too plausible for some. NBC legal analyst Lisa Bloom is among those who found his ability to check all the boxes constituting reasonable fear of serious bodily harm a bit too convenient. Of course, unlike the rest of us pontificators, the grand jurors were able to assess Wilson's demeanor and judge his credibility.

Eyewitness accounts both supported and contradicted Wilson's account. *The Washington Post* created an interactive compilation of this testimony (http://wapo.st/1z89Tvx). Some, like Wilson, saw Brown charge ("started charging toward the officer"; "I thought he was trying to charge him"), while others saw surrender ("kept saying, 'I got, my hands is up'"; "he was walking in a demeanor as 'I give up'").

The result has been a parlor game of sorts where biased observers point to the testimony of one eyewitness or another to support their argument of whether there should have been an indictment.

But even if eyewitness accounts are read to support an indictment, the physical evidence suggested otherwise. Paul G. Cassell, a criminal law professor at the S.J. Quinney College of Law at the University of Utah, who writes for the *Volokh Conspiracy*, pored through that evidence and wrote last week in the *Post*: "The physical evidence is important because, unlike witness testimony, it doesn't lie and can't be accused of bias (such as racism). As the cliche goes, the physical evidence is what it is."

His conclusion? That the powder burns, DNA, bullet trajectory, blood evidence, and shell casings all support Wilson's account.

Wilson said that Brown wrestled him for his gun inside the police vehicle and that during that struggle Wilson fired two shots. The medical examiner testified that the soot was indicative of a gun firing just six to nine inches from Brown's hand, and his DNA was found on Wilson's gun.

The medical examiner's report also said the fatal head wound sustained by Brown was angled "downward and rightward," which is consistent with Wilson's testimony of being charged.

The blood evidence at the scene also comported with Wilson's account, showing Brown moving toward the officer, not surrendering in place. The location of the 12 shell casings retrieved also supported Wilson's story as to location.

By MICHAEL SMERCONISH
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Michael Smerconish writes for The Philadelphia Inquirer, *and is host of* Smerconish *on CNN. Readers may contact him at www.smerconish.com*

Reasonable minds might differ whether any conflicting testimony met a threshold of probable cause, but there's no way such evidence would ultimately have convicted Wilson "beyond a reasonable doubt." Wilson was free to use deadly force if he reasonably believed it was necessary to prevent death or serious injury. No criminal jury would have found him guilty of first-degree murder (in which the accused "knowingly causes" death "after deliberations") or even involuntary manslaughter of the second degree ("criminal negligence"). If McCullough believed those burdens could reasonably have been met, he would have brought charges against Wilson without a grand jury investigation. Knowing that he could not secure conviction, McCullough was ethically bound not to bring charges.

Finally, we come to the most significant issue presented in this case: race. Did Wilson stop Brown because he was black? Compare Wilson's actions with those of George Zimmerman. Many, including me, think he stalked Trayvon Martin, who was walking home at night, simply because he was black.

Is there anything to suggest that Wilson had similar motivation? Wilson had no complaint filed against him during his time on the force. He was rightfully in the neighborhood, responding to a distress call, where he encountered Brown. When he stopped Brown, Wilson had just received a police radio description of a man in a black shirt who had robbed cigarillos from a nearby convenience store, a description that matched Brown. There was no racial profiling. Period.

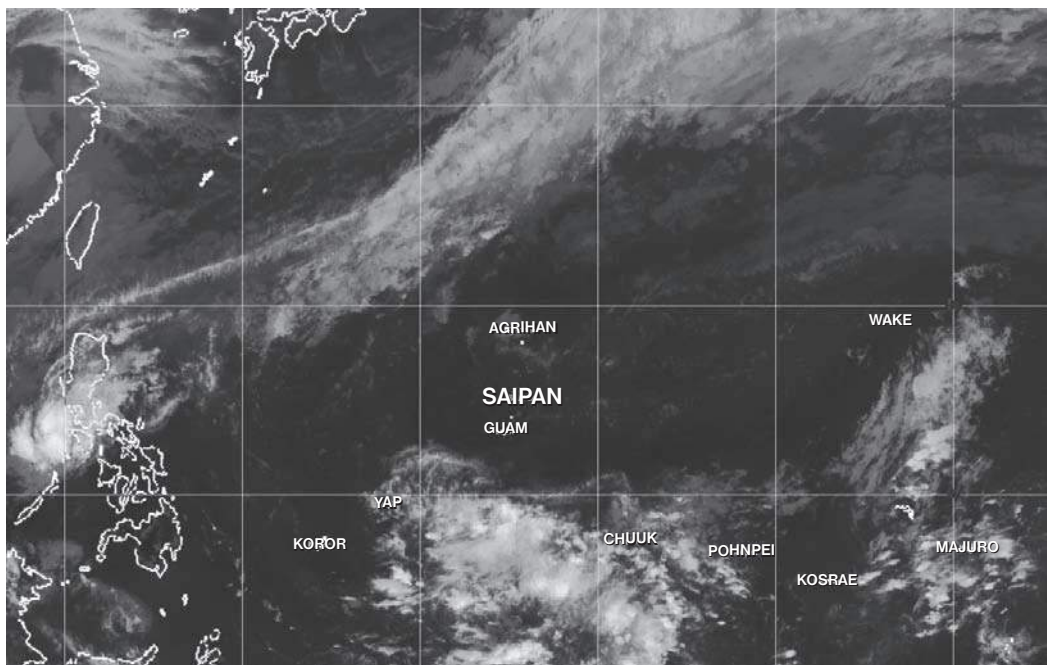
The death of the unarmed Michael Brown is a terrible tragedy. While the process by which it was investigated wasn't perfect, the result, warts and all, was just. Some police do give perfectly innocent young black men a tough time for no good reason, but this isn't the case to make that point.

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2014
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends west-southwestward from Iwo To Island at 25N141E to beyond 130E at 19N. Widespread cloudiness and showers are found along and up to 400 miles northwest of this front. A shear line north of Wake Island stretches west-southwestward from 24N180E to 23N165E to 20N155E. Scattered light showers are occurring along and up to 200 miles north of this boundary. A surface trough extends eastward from 4N133E through a weak circulation centered well south of Guam near 4N145E to 3N153E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring between Yap and Chuuk within 150 miles either side of a line from 9N141E to 2N154E. Low-level convergence is producing scattered showers near and east of Chuuk between 6N and 10N from 151E to 156E. A trade-wind disturbance is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms across the Marshall Islands in the area bounded by 9N166E to 10N169E to 5N175E to EQ174E to 6N166E back to 9N166E. This includes Kwajalein, Majuro and Tarawa. An upper-level low centered south-southwest of Wake Island near 15N165E is triggering scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms between Wake and Kwajalein within 75 miles either side of a line from 10N168E to 17N172E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Thundershowers	▲85	▼79
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼78
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼78
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79

Around the Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲72	▼63
Beijing	Windy	▲42	▼22
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲68	▼61
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼66
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲51	▼45
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲75	▼55
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼75
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲75	▼59
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲73	▼52
New York	Rain	▲43	▼38
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲56	▼46
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲42	▼38
Pusan	Showers	▲56	▼42
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲59	▼42
Salem	Rain	▲57	▼53
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲63	▼55
Seoul	Cloudy	▲41	▼32
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲50	▼46
Washington, DC	Showers	▲45	▼38

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

3:56 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.2 Feet
10:58 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
4:45 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
9:11 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Thursday	6:33 AM	5:47 PM
Friday	6:33 AM	5:48 PM
Saturday	6:34 AM	5:48 PM
Sunday	6:34 AM	5:49 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:05 PM	9:16 AM
Thursday	9:54 PM	9:59 AM
Friday	10:42 PM	10:40 AM
Saturday	11:29 PM	11:19 AM
Sunday		11:57 AM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2014

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7

SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)

DL287	6:05am	1:05am+1	2, 6 via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
DL297	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
7C 3401	4:30pm	8:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764A	1:30am	5:30am	4, 7
MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:30am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5069/PR111	2:45am	4:50pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	7:20am	2, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:45pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
DL287/473	6:05am	9:50pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
UA5071/PR111	6:40am	4:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5071/PR111	7:15am	4:50pm	1, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	5 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:50pm	Daily via ICN

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:10am	12:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:40am	12:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:00am	10:35pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	10:35pm	6 via Rota-GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5038	1:10pm	2:40pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5038	1:10pm	1:45pm	2, 4

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4

PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN

DL298	4:30am	3:00pm	3, 7 via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
7C 3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:30pm	5:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763A	4:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 6
MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	4, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:55pm	3:10am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA5041	7:35am	6:25pm	1,5 via GUM
PR110/UA5077	7:35am	8:05pm	3, 6, 7 via GUM
PR110/UA5043	7:35am	10:10pm	1, 5 via GUM
DL172/288	9:40am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 7 via GUM
UA190/5077	10:00am	8:05pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	4 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	2 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:59pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:59pm	8:05pm+1	2 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:59pm	10:10pm+1	5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	Daiily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA180/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA180/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA180/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1, 5 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA180/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

More Americans to buy homes with 3 percent down

WASHINGTON (AP)—Some Americans will soon be able to buy a home with a down payment as low as 3 percent, compared with the current minimum of 5 percent, the mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac say.

The new lending guidelines announced by the companies Monday are designed to help more low-income and first-time buyers afford homes. Millions of Americans lost their savings or no longer had the income needed to set aside money for a home in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis and the Great Recession. That has held down the sales of houses and condominiums and slowed the economic recovery.

The guidelines are designed to prevent the kind of reckless lending that fueled a housing bubble and eventually triggered the recession. Borrowers must have enough income to repay loans on a monthly basis for homes that would be their main residence. This guideline would be intended to limit financial speculation.

"These underwriting guidelines provide a responsible approach to improving access to credit while ensuring safe and sound lending practices," Mel Watt, director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, said in a statement. The FHFA oversees Fannie and Freddie, which have been under government control since 2008 because of the housing bust.

Watt had announced in October that Fannie and Freddie had reached an agreement with major banks to expand lending. The FHFA declined Monday to say how many borrowers might benefit from having a 3 percent down payment.

The standard down payment for mortgages insured through Fannie and Freddie has been 20 percent. That would mean that a first-time buyer would need $41,600 in cash to purchase a median-priced home of $208,300, according to the National Association of Realtors. Just 29 percent of home purchases in October went to first-time buyers, compared with a historic average of 40 percent, the Realtors reported.

The new loans would be fixed-rate mortgages of up to 30 years for primary residences, though some policies vary between the companies.

Big Mac hurting as customers get pickier

NEW YORK (AP)—Hold the pickles, onions and special sauce. The Big Mac is becoming a victim of finicky tastes.

As sales continue to slide in the U.S., McDonald's plans to expand a test that lets people build their own burgers by tapping on a touchscreen to pick the bread, cheese and toppings they want. The company says it will bring the option to 2,000 of its more than 14,000 U.S. locations next year.

The "Create Your Taste" program is a departure for McDonald's, which was built to deliver food consistently, quickly and affordably. That model has come under pressure as people gravitate toward places like Chipotle, which lets people pick what goes on their bowls and burritos as they walk down a line.

According to industry executives and analysts, the ability to customize food orders is becoming more important, particularly among people in their 20s and 30s. McDonald's has already been trying to adjust by installing new kitchen prep tables that can hold more toppings and sauces.

The plans to offer greater customization come as McDonald's fights to boost declining sales and customer traffic. On Monday, it said U.S. sales fell 4.6 percent in November at established locations. The figure fell 4 percent in the unit that includes the Asia-Pacific region, where the company is fighting to recover from a food supplier scandal. Overall, global sales declined 2.2 percent for the month.

AP

In this April 2, 2014, file photo, a man talks on a mobile phone next to a downtown McDonald's in Hong Kong.

In the U.S., CEO Don Thompson has conceded the company hasn't done enough to keep up with shifting habits and that changes are in store.

"We haven't been changing at the same rate as our customers' eating-out expectations," Thompson said in October.

Offering greater customization could be a challenge for McDonald's, however. For "complicated" orders, burgers might take as long as five to seven minutes to prepare, Greg Watson, senior vice president of menu innovation, said in a phone interview. That's more than the couple of minutes it should take for regular orders, he said.

The customized burgers are also more expensive than core items like Big Macs, Watson said. But it's not clear whether people will be willing to wait longer or shell out more money for a burger from McDonald's.

Watson said McDonald's hasn't yet decided on expansion of "Create Your Taste" beyond the 2,000 locations next year. In Australia, McDonald's said earlier this year a customized burger option would be expanded nationally. The locations that have the "Create Your Taste" option still offer the regular menu.

As for the regular menu, McDonald's plans to remove some items "with slower movement" from the national menu in the U.S. The Bacon Clubhouse burger, which McDonald's introduced this year as a premium offering, could become a regional offering, Watson said.

Small investors add fuel to China's big stock boom

BEIJING (AP)—Gong Bin, a marketing employee in Shanghai, watched Chinese stock prices gallop upward for months before he finally gave in and put the equivalent of 2 1/2 months' salary into the surging market.

In two months, Gong made a 10 percent return on his 20,000 yuan ($3,300) investment.

"My colleagues were always talking about the money they made from the market, so I thought, why not?" said Gong, 27. "It turned out to be the right decision."

Even as a downturn in the world's second-largest economy deepens, Gong and a growing army of other small investors are riding a boom in China's volatile stock markets.

Buoyed by hopes for an economic rebound combined with outright cheerleading by the state press, the market benchmark has soared 49 percent since June, including 8 percent last week alone.

Economic growth fell to a five-year low of 7.3 percent last quarter but investor sentiment was recharged by Beijing's surprise interest rate cut Nov. 22 that is expected to put a floor under the slump.

"Investors anticipate the economy will bottom out sometime in the spring, and they are buying equities to take advantage of that," said economist Dariusz Kowalczyk at Credit Agricole CIB.

Still, he cautioned, "I think the prospects for the economy are just not good enough to take the equity market significantly higher."

In a new sign of economic weakness, customs data Monday showed China's imports fell 6.7 percent in November compared with a year earlier instead of recording the small gain forecasters expected. Exports grew by an unexpectedly weak 4.7 percent, down from October's 10.6 percent rate.

Despite that, the Shanghai benchmark ended the day up another 2.8 percent.

Small investors have repeatedly been burned by booms and busts in Chinese stock markets that are rife with complaints of fraud and insider trading. But with interest paid on savings accounts low, Chinese investors appear willing to make big bets on stocks and real estate.

Zhao Shizhong, who works in finance for a chain of restaurants, said he has 600,000 to 700,000 yuan ($100,000-$110,000) invested. He said his biggest trade lately was 60,000 to 70,000 yuan ($10,000 to $11,000)—the equivalent of a year's salary.

"This past week, I did more trading than usual, bought some and sold some," said Zhao. "I won't trade more in the near future. I feel it is time to control risk."

Prince William condemns wildlife trafficking

WASHINGTON (AP)—In his first visit to Washington, Britain's Prince William on Monday sharply denounced the rapid growth of illegal wildlife trading worldwide and announced a task force to examine the transportation industry's role in facilitating such crimes.

The Duke of Cambridge described wildlife trafficking as "one of the most insidious forms of corruption and criminality" where networks of gangs profit from the illegal killing or capture of animals.

"Together, they loot our planet to feed mankind's ignorant craving for exotic pets, trinkets, cures and ornaments derived from the world's vanishing and irreplaceable species," William said at an anti-corruption conference at the World Bank.

Citing statistics from Interpol, the international police organization, William said recent seizures of illegal wildlife products were the largest the agency has seen. In 2011, the 17 biggest seizures by customs agents resulted in 27,000 kilograms of ivory, equivalent to the tusks of some 3,000 elephants.

William said his interest in the issue stems from his father's and grandfather's longtime passion for wildlife conservation. The prince is president of "United for Wildlife," a coalition of seven global conservation groups that will organize the new task force.

The task force, which will include representatives from the transportation industry, will gather data on illegal wildlife trade routes and commission research. It will also call on companies to adopt a "zero-tolerance" policy on such trading and develop industry recommendations within a year.

Former British foreign secretary William Hague will lead the task force.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
17,852.48	2,060.31	4,740.69
-106.31	-15.06	-40.06
-0.59%	-0.73%	-0.84%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.2134	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7522	Philippine Peso	44.61
British Pound	0.6394	Indian Rupee	61.885	Singapore Dollar	1.3194
Canadian Dollar	1.1491	Indonesian Rupiah	12347.5	South Korean Won	1108.37
Chinese Yuan	6.1999	Japanese Yen	120.255	Swiss Franc	0.9764
Euro	0.8122	Malaysian Ringgit	3.4903	Taiwan Dollar	31.2266
		New Zealand Dollar	1.3101	Thailand Baht	32.9683

Nation

6 dead after plane crashes into Maryland home

GAITHERSBURG, Md. (AP)—A small, private jet slammed into a house Monday, killing a woman and her young sons inside the home and three people on the aircraft, authorities said.

The jet crashed around 10:45 a.m. in Gaithersburg, a Washington, D.C., suburb, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Chief Steve Lohr said during a news conference.

Authorities quickly said all three people in the plane had been killed, but it took hours for fire crews to sweep the home and confirm that three people were inside. They were identified as 36-year-old Marie Gemmell and her two sons, 3-year-old Cole and a 1-month-old Devon, police said.

They were found in a second-floor bathroom. Gemmell was lying on top of her young sons in an apparent effort to shield them from the smoke and fire, said police Capt. Paul Starks. Her husband and a school-age daughter were not home and were accounted for, police said.

AP

Montgomery County, Md., firefighters stand outside a house where a small private jet crashed in Gaithersburg, Md., Monday, Dec. 8, 2014.

The fuselage of the jet crashed into the front lawn of an adjacent home, which was heavily damaged by fire, and investigators believe one of its wings, which had fuel inside, was sheared off and tore through the front of the Gemmell home, said Robert Sumwalt, a National Transportation Safety Board member. Witnesses reported seeing and hearing a secondary explosion after the plane hit the ground.

The two-story, wood-frame home was gutted. The first floor was nearly completely blown out and smoke drifted from a gaping hole in what was left of the collapsing roof. No one was injured in the adjacent homes that also had major damage.

The founder and CEO of a North Carolina clinical research organization was among those on the plane. Health Decisions of Durham, North Carolina, said in a news release that Dr. Michael Rosenberg was among those killed.

Rosenberg was a pilot who crashed a different plane in Gaithersburg on March 1, 2010, according a government official who wasn't authorized to speak publicly and asked not to be named. Investigators are still trying to determine if Rosenberg was at the controls at the time of Monday's crash.

Fred Pedreira, 67, who lives near the crash site, said he had just returned home from the grocery store and was parking his car when he saw the jet and immediately knew something was wrong.

"This guy, when I saw him, for a fast jet with the wheels down, I said, `I think he's coming in too low,'" Pedreira told The Associated Press. "Then he was 90 degrees—sideways—and then he went belly-up into the house and it was a ball of fire. It was terrible.

"I tell you, I got goosebumps when I saw it," Pedreira said. "I said, `My God, those are people in that plane.'"

Emily Gradwohl, 22, who lives two doors down from the house the jet hit, was home at the time and ran outside to see what had happened.

"I heard like a loud crash, and the whole house just shook," Gradwohl told The AP. "We got jackets on, ran outside and saw one of the houses completely set on fire."

She said planes fly low over the neighborhood every day but she had never worried about a crash.

The Embrarer EMB-500/Phenom 100 twin-engine jet, which seats six people, was on approach to Montgomery County Airpark, which is about a mile from the crash site, officials said. A team of NTSB investigators recovered the cockpit voice and flight data recorders from the downed plane.

Male military sex assault victims slow to complain

WASHINGTON (AP)—Greg Nelson had just turned 21 when he went out partying with friends in Southern California and got really drunk. So, when a man he didn't know offered to let him crash in a nearby apartment, his friends urged him to accept.

A Marine who had joined the Corps in 2007, Nelson remembers getting sick and being offered water that seemed to have white specks in it. He said the man then offered him another glass of water and a pill that was supposedly Motrin.

What happened next is a bit of a blur to Nelson, who says he blacked out and woke up feeling like he was "in a vegetative state." He remembers the man sexually assaulting him, but says he couldn't move and blacked out again.

Sexual assaults on men in the military happen more often than people might think. But Nelson, who left the Marine Corps in 2011 as a corporal, is one of the rare men willing to report it and talk about it openly.

According to an anonymous survey released last week by the Pentagon, nearly 1 percent of males in the U.S. military said they had experienced unwanted sexual contact, compared to 4.3 percent of women. That equates to about 10,500 men and 8,500 women. Yet only 14 percent of assaults reported last year involved male victims.

Afraid to be seen as victims or as weak or gay, men in the hypermasculine military culture often don't feel comfortable reaching out for help or reporting sexual assaults. Over the past year, though, the services have increased efforts to reach out to male victims, urging them to come forward so they can receive treatment and so officials can go after perpetrators.

The campaign urges troops to intervene in potential assault situations, and not just when the victim is a woman. Troops are pressed to report any assault, even ones prior to their enlistment or that involve civilian attackers.

"The question is, 'Is our population in the military ready to talk about this?'" says Nate Galbreath, senior executive adviser for the Pentagon's sexual assault prevention office. "We want to get them there. But it's going to be bit by bit. Because it's very, very hard for people to think about someone who is a soldier and is strong" as a victim of sexual assault.

Military leaders turned for advice to Jim Hopper, a Harvard University expert on male sexual abuse.

"In our culture in general, to be sexually assaulted is completely the opposite of what men are supposed to experience," he says, noting a common belief that, "men aren't supposed to be sexually dominated, they're not supposed to express vulnerable feelings."

While people may question how a burly infantry officer or Marine could be assaulted, often he is drunk, passed out or asleep.

One Army commander recalled an incident in which one of his soldiers was drunk and woke up to find he was being sexually accosted by another drunken soldier. The two men ended up fighting, and it took months for Army investigators to sort out the situation. In many cases, the commander said, there are conflicting stories, and in the time it takes to finish an investigation victims can spiral out of control as they struggle to deal with the incident.

Investigators eventually solved the case, and both soldiers ended up leaving the Army—one for committing the assault and the other for discipline issues brought on by it. The commander spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the case.

According to Hopper and other experts, sexual assault is more about power and control than sex, and has little to do with homosexual behavior. Aggressors almost always identify themselves as heterosexual, said Hopper.

ACROSS THE NATION

Federal autopsy released in Ferguson shooting

ST. LOUIS (AP)—A federal autopsy in the Ferguson police shooting reached similar conclusions to those performed by local officials and a private examiner hired by 18-year-old Michael Brown's family, documents released Monday evening show. The Armed Forces Medical Examiner System's autopsy on Brown, conducted at the request of the Department of Justice, was among grand jury documents that St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney Bob McCulloch released Monday with little explanation. Other documents include transcripts of eight federal interviews of possible witnesses to Brown's shooting in early August; police radio traffic; and an alleged audio recording of the shots fired by Wilson.

US unveils federal law enforcement profiling curbs

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Obama administration issued guidelines Monday that restrict the ability of federal law enforcement agencies to profile on the basis of religion, national origin and other characteristics, protocols the Justice Department hopes could be a model for local departments as the nation tackles questions about the role race plays in policing. The policy, which replaces decade-old guidelines established under the Bush administration, also will require federal agencies to provide training and to collect data on complaints. Civil rights advocates said they welcomed the broader protections, but were disappointed that the guidance will exempt security screening in airports and border checkpoints and won't be binding on local and state police agencies.

Fire destroys LA construction site, snarls traffic

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A raging fire Monday destroyed a massive apartment complex under construction in downtown Los Angeles, sending up flames that were visible for miles while raining ash on a large area and snarling rush-hour traffic. It was one of two destructive early morning fires in the city. The other heavily damaged a building that houses multiple businesses in a neighborhood a couple miles away. More than 250 firefighters fought the downtown blaze that was sparked around 1:20 a.m. at a block-long building site, Fire Department Chief Ralph Terrazas said. Flames consumed the seven-story, wood-framed structure and scorched adjacent high-rises before being brought under control within 90 minutes.

3 dead, 8 injured after vehicle hits, kills bear

MIAMI (AP)—Three good Samaritans were killed Sunday night when they were struck by a car after they'd stopped along a dark, two-lane road in the Florida Everglades to assist another motorist whose vehicle hit a black bear. The accident took place on Snake Road, which is in the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation, about 18 miles north of Alligator Alley and about halfway between Fort Lauderdale and Naples. Seminole police spokesman Gary Bitner told The Associated Press that Caroline Billie, a tribe member, was driving a sports utility vehicle when she saw the bear crossing the road just before 7 p.m. Sunday and couldn't stop in time to avoid hitting it. The bear was killed, and the impact damaged Billie's vehicle to the extent that she wasn't able to drive it.

Asia

Hagupit kills 21 but spares Philippines of huge losses

SAN JUAN, Philippines (AP)—A storm that began as a frighteningly powerful typhoon started to blow away from the Philippines Tuesday, after leaving at least 21 people dead and forcing more than a million into shelters.

Typhoon Hagupit (pronounced HA'-goo-pit) dissipated into a tropical depression after crossing Lubang Island, 135 kilometers (84 miles) southwest of Manila, and was blowing into the South China Sea, forecasters said.

Batangas, the last major province lashed by Hagupit overnight, has so far not reported any casualties or major damage, echoing similar assessments from many central Philippines provinces spared of major losses.

"With God's grace, there are zero casualties and no injuries because we were able to prepare," said Mayor Rodolfo Manalo of Batangas' idyllic San Juan town, a flood-prone coastal community popular for its beach resorts, where more than 2,800 villagers fled to a public gymnasium before the storm slammed ashore.

Many of the archipelago's central provinces were still reeling from last year's monster Typhoon Haiyan, which left more than 7,300 people dead or missing and a massive trail of destruction, fueling worries about Hagupit as it approached from the Pacific with menacing gusts of 250 kph (155 mph) last week.

Those concerns meant more than a million people readily fled from villages in the path of Hagupit—Filipino for "smash" or "lash—into government emergency shelters.

Hagupit left at least 21 people dead, many of whom drowned in Eastern Samar province, where the typhoon made its first landfall, according to the Philippine Red Cross. The government disaster-response agency has reported only 11 deaths, saying it was still verifying other reported casualties.

Although Hagupit blew in from the Pacific with enormous force, seasonal cold winds blowing down from China deprived it of the warm and humid seas where it draws power. The typhoon, the 18th to batter this disaster-prone country this year, slowly fizzled out.

ASIAN BRIEFS

China sentences 8 to death for attacks in Xinjiang

BEIJING (AP)—A Chinese court on Monday sentenced eight people to death on charges of leading terror groups and setting off explosives in two attacks that left 46 people dead in the far western region of Xinjiang, home of the Muslim Uighur minority, state media said. The Urumqi Intermediate People's Court in the capital of Xinjiang also handed out suspended death sentences to five others, China Central Television said, without mentioning when the trials were held. In a separate case, the same court jailed seven minority students of a prominent Uighur scholar for three to eight years after convicting them of separatism, rights lawyer Li Fangping said Monday.

5 girls killed during basketball game in China

BEIJING (AP)—A wall at the side of a school basketball court collapsed during a game, killing five girls and injuring two others, local officials in eastern China said Tuesday. The incident happened Monday afternoon in a middle school in Huaibei city after the teams surrounded a player with a sprained ankle, according to the Anhui provincial work safety bureau. A wall at the side of the court then collapsed, burying some people under it. The Huaibei city government said in an online statement that police were investigating the cause of the incident and questioning school officials. It said that one of the injured was in stable condition and the other received minor injuries.

19 candidates vie for Sri Lankan presidency

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his former health minister were among 19 people who submitted candidacy papers Monday to contest next month's presidential election. Rajapaksa, who was first elected in 2005 and won re-election in 2009, called the election two years early to seek an unprecedented third term amid growing international and local criticism. His administration has been accused of corruption, nepotism and autocratic leadership, and faces a United Nations inquiry into alleged war crimes during the closing months of a 25-year separatist war.

Afghanistan mired in war as US combat command ends

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—American and NATO troops closed their operational command in Afghanistan on Monday, lowering flags in a ceremony to mark the formal end of their combat mission in a country still mired in war 13 years after the U.S.-led invasion toppled the Taliban regime for harboring those responsible for 9/11. The closing of the command, which oversaw the day-to-day operations of coalition combat forces, is one of the final steps in a transition to a support and training role that begins Jan. 1. But with President Barack Obama's recent move authorizing U.S. forces in Afghanistan to carry out military operations against Taliban and al-Qaida targets, America's longest war will in fact continue for at least another two years.

Scarecrows outnumber people in dying Japan town

By ELAINE KURTENBACH
AP BUSINESS WRITER

AP

In this Thursday, Nov. 6, 2014 photo, Tsukimi Ayano speaks as she stitches a scarecrow girl by her outdoor hearth at her home in the mountainous village of Nagoro, Tokushima Prefecture, southern Japan.

NAGORO, Japan (AP)—This village deep in the rugged mountains of southern Japan once was home to hundreds of families. Now, only 35 people remain, outnumbered three-to-one by scarecrows that Tsukimi Ayano crafted to help fill the days and replace neighbors who died or moved away.

At 65, Ayano is one of the younger residents of Nagoro. She moved back from Osaka to look after her 85-year-old father after decades away.

"They bring back memories," Ayano said of the life-sized dolls crowded into corners of her farmhouse home, perched on fences and trees, huddled side-by-side at a produce stall, the bus stop, anywhere a living person might stop to take a rest.

"That old lady used to come and chat and drink tea. That old man used to love to drink sake and tell stories. It reminds me of the old times, when they were still alive and well," she said.

Even more than its fading status as an export superpower, Japan's dwindling population may be its biggest challenge. More than 10,000 towns and villages in Japan are depopulated, the homes and infrastructure crumbling as the countryside empties thanks to the falling birthrate and rapid aging.

First the jobs go. Then the schools. Eventually, the electricity meters stop.

Neither Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling Liberal Democratic Party nor any of its rivals have figured out how to "revive localities," an issue that has perplexed Japanese leaders for decades.

But local communities are trying various strategies for attracting younger residents, slowing if not reversing their decline. In Kamiyama, a farming community closer to the regional capital, community organizers have mapped out plans for attracting artists and high-tech companies.

Nagoro is more typical of the thousands of communities that are turning into ghost towns or at best, open-air museums, frozen in time.

The one-street town is mostly abandoned, its shops and homes permanently shuttered.

The closure of the local elementary school two years ago was the last straw. Ayano unlocks the door and guides visitors through spotless classrooms populated with scarecrow students and teachers.

When she returned to her hometown 13 years ago, Ayano tried farming. Thinking her radish seeds may have been eaten by crows, she decided to make some scarecrows. Now there are more 100 scattered around Nagoro and nearby towns.

Like handcarved Buddhist sculptures, each has its own whimsical expression. Some sleep, their eyelids permanently shut. Others cuddle toddler scarecrows or man plows and hoes.

Ayano brings one along for company on her 90-minute drive to buy groceries in the nearest big town. But most remain behind, to be photographed and marveled at by tourists who detour through the winding mountain roads.

"If I hadn't made these scarecrows, people would just drive right by," said Ayano.

The plight of Japan's countryside is partly a consequence of the country's economic success. As Japan grew increasingly affluent after World War II, younger Japanese flooded into the cities to fill jobs in factories and service industries, leaving their elders to tend small farms.

Greater Tokyo, with more than 37 million people and Osaka-Kobe, with 11.5 million, account for nearly 40 percent of the country's 127 million people.

"There's been this huge sucking sound as the countryside is emptied out," said Joel Cohen, a professor at Columbia University's Laboratory of Populations.

Japan's population began to decline in 2010 from a peak of 128 million. Without a drastic increase in the birthrate or a loosening of the staunch Japanese resistance to immigration, it is forecast to fall to 108 million by 2050 and to 87 million by 2060. By then, four in 10 Japanese will be over 65 years old.

The population of Miyoshi, which is the town closest to Nagoro, fell from 45,340 in 1985 to about 27,000 last year. A quarter of its population is over 75 years old. To entice residents to have more children, the town began offering free nursery care for third children, free diapers and formula to age 2 and free health care through junior high school.

"The way to stop this is to get people to have more babies," said mayor Seiichi Kurokawa. "Apart from that, we need for people to return here or move here."

But it's not an easy sell, despite the fresh air and abundant space.

"You can't just grab people by the necks like kittens and drag them here," Kurokawa said.

Getting residents of half-empty towns to accept newcomers can also be a challenge.

In Kamiyama, to the east, the town still struggles to convince owners who are often relatives living in distant cities to open up abandoned homes for rent or renovation, said Shinya Ominami, chairman of a civic group that has led efforts to revive the town.

In a briefing for potential investors and visiting officials, Ominami shows a slide of the town's shopping street, dotted with houses that are empty, and then another with some of the buildings filled with new businesses—a bistro, a design studio, an IT incubation hub.

"Once we accept this is the reality, we can figure out how to cope with it," Ominami said.

World

US prepares for security risks from torture report

WASHINGTON (AP)—American embassies, military units and other U.S. interests are bracing for possible security threats related to Tuesday's planned release of a report on the CIA's harsh interrogation techniques, the White House says.

The report from the Senate Intelligence Committee will be the first public accounting of the CIA's use of torture on al-Qaida detainees held in secret facilities in Europe and Asia in the years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks. The committee is expected to release a 480-page executive summary of the more than 6,000-page report compiled by Democrats on the panel.

"There are some indications that the release of the report could lead to a greater risk that is posed to U.S. facilities and individuals all around the world," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Monday. "The administration has taken the prudent steps to ensure that the proper security precautions are in place at U.S. facilities around the globe."

Likewise, Army Col. Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman, said that "there is certainly the possibility that the release of this report could cause unrest" and therefore combatant commands have been directed to take protective measures.

According to many U.S. officials who have read it, the document alleges that the harsh interrogations failed to produce unique and life-saving intelligence. And it asserts that the CIA lied about the covert program to officials at the White House, the Justice Department and congressional oversight committees.

Earnest said that regardless of whether the U.S. gleaned important intelligence through the interrogations, "the president believes that the use of those tactics was unwarranted, that they were inconsistent with our values and did not make us safer."

While the White House has said it welcomes the release of the summary, officials say they do have concerns about potential security threats that could follow.

On Friday, Secretary of State John Kerry asked Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the committee chairwoman, to "consider" the timing of the release. White House officials said Obama had been aware that Kerry planned to raise the issue with Feinstein, but they insisted the president continued to support the report's release.

South Africa: Briton acquitted of honeymoon murder

AP

Ami Denborg, left, and her brother Anish Hindocha, right, react after the court case that acquitted their sister's former husband Shrien Dwani from murdering her at the high court in Cape Town, South Africa, Monday, Dec. 8, 2014.

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—A British businessman was acquitted Monday of paying hitmen to kill his wife while they were on their honeymoon in South Africa and making it look like a botched carjacking—a verdict that prompted a call by the justice minister for an inquiry into it and other recent high profile prosecutions.

Shrien Dewani, who fought extradition from Britain for years, was found not guilty in the 2010 shooting death of his wife, Anni, in a township outside Cape Town. In issuing her ruling, Judge Jeanette Traverso said the prosecution was riddled with inconsistencies.

"There is no evidence upon which a reasonable court, acting carefully, can convict the accused," the judge said.

Anni Dewani's stunned family bowed their heads amid shouting from the public gallery. "The justice system has failed us," said Ami Denborg, Anni Dewani's sister.

"Our family ... returns home with more questions than answers and sleepless nights for the rest of our lives," the victim's uncle, Ashok Hindocha, said in a statement.

The Dewani trial opened in October as another sensational courtroom drama involving the shooting death of a young woman was drawing to a conclusion—that of Oscar Pistorius, the double-amputee track star. Like the Pistorius case, the Dewani trial focused attention on South Africa's post-apartheid justice system, high crime rate and police forensic investigations.

Monday's not-guilty verdict prompted the South African Justice Ministry to demand a report on why this and other prominent cases have been lost by state prosecutors.

Justice Minister Michael Masutha requested a full inquiry into the Dewani case and two others: that of Pistorius, who was convicted of the lesser charge of culpable homicide in the killing of his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, and the investigation into the shooting death of South Africa's national soccer team captain, Senzo Meyiwa.

"He wants to reflect on how the system has fared in all these high profile cases that have been negatively reported," Justice Ministry spokesman Mthunzi Mhaga said of the order. "Negative reporting to him means criticism of the system."

Kelly Phelps, a legal expert from the University of Cape Town said the public outcry over the Dewani case did not mean Judge Traverso's ruling was unfair. The judge's detailed ruling, read over three hours, was carefully considered, she said.

"The fault here lies with the preparation of the state's case, not the judge's handling of the case," Phelps said.

Dewani, a wealthy businessman with a jet-set lifestyle, never took the stand during the trial and outlined his version of events in a statement read out in court. In it, he said his wife was shot to death when they were kidnapped at gunpoint and he was forced out of the car.

Dewani also acknowledged being bisexual and surfing gay websites after his wife's death—apparently to pre-empt any prosecution effort to argue that he murdered because he felt trapped in the marriage. But he maintained he was devoted to the relationship with his wife, a Swedish national, who like Dewani, was of Indian descent.

Two South African men, already convicted of the murder, testified that Dewani paid 15,000 rand (about $2,100) for them to kill his wife. However, in cross-examination they contradicted each other and changed details of their stories. A third man was also convicted, but died recently in prison.

Judge Traverso said the evidence was riddled with inconsistencies.

"There were so many lies, mistakes and inconsistencies, that one simply cannot know where the lies end and where the truth begins," said Traverso, who delivered the ruling after deliberating for two weeks on the defense's application to dismiss the case.

After the verdict, Dewani was released from a hospital where he had been held for depression.

South Africa's prosecuting authority said it still believes that Dewani orchestrated his wife's murder.

General: Islamic State fighters on their heels

KUWAIT CITY (AP)—Islamic State fighters have lost the initiative in Iraq and are now "on defense" with far less ability to generate the kind of ground maneuvers that enabled the extremists to capture large chunks of Iraq earlier this year, a senior U.S. general said Monday.

Army Lt. Gen. James Terry, the top commander of Operation Inherent Resolve, the U.S. campaign to defeat IS, also said the nascent effort to rebuild Iraq's army will soon get a boost from coalition countries that plan to commit roughly 1,500 military trainers. Much of the Iraq army collapsed or proved ineffective in the face of IS's onslaught last summer.

In his first extensive interview since taking command of the counter-Islamic State campaign in October, Terry told a small group of reporters that IS is "on defense, trying to hold what they have gained." He added that the group, which is armed with tanks and other U.S.-made war equipment captured from the Iraqi army, is "still able to conduct some limited attacks."

Terry said his first priority is to develop more fully an international military coalition against IS.

The U.S. intervened directly starting in August with airstrikes that have damaged IS's fighting force, as well as its economic and logistics bases in Syria. But questions remain about the Iraqis' ability to retake the ground they lost and to sustain a military campaign with President Barack Obama ruling out the use of American ground combat forces.

Israeli parliament dissolves itself, sets election

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli lawmakers unanimously voted Monday to dissolve parliament, officially ending the legislature's term two years ahead of schedule and kicking off the country's election campaign ahead of a March 17 nationwide vote.

A week after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government dramatically disintegrated, the 120-seat Knesset voted 93-0 favor of disbanding and ending one of the shortest serving parliaments in Israeli history.

Early polls show Netanyahu likely returning to power. But a growing coalition of anti-Netanyahu factions threatens to depose the longtime leader.

Israel's government, which took office in early 2013, had been riven by divisions from the outset over major issues facing the country. Netanyahu's fractious center-right Cabinet had been bickering for weeks over the budget, a housing tax break and a bill that would enshrine into law Israel's status as a Jewish state.

Netanyahu is looking to secure a fourth term as premier by increasing support for his hardline Likud Party. He hopes to secure a strong majority for a "national bloc" that includes his traditional allies of ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman's nationalist Yisrael Beitenu faction and the hard line Jewish Home party, which is strongly linked to the West Bank settler movement. This bloc tends to take a hard line in peace talks with the Palestinians.

In the last vote, the parties earned a combined 61 out of 120 seats in parliament. The majority proved too slim for Netanyahu to rule effectively and he was forced to reach out to two centrist parties, Yesh Atid and Hatnuah, to shore up his majority. Netanyahu's feuds with these parties led to his decision to fire their ministers and call a new election.

Hatnuah leader Tzipi Livni appears to be on the brink of sealing an alliance with Isaac Herzog and his center-left Labor party. A poll published Monday showed the potential joint list surging past Likud to become the largest party in the next Knesset. But it would still likely need the support or either Lieberman or the ultra-Orthodox for Herzog to replace Netanyahu as prime minister.

Focus

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP)—In primary and secondary schools of this Central American capital, "hallway" is not just another word for corridor but slang for a gantlet of gangsters who hit up instructors for money on the way to the classroom.

AP

In this photo Nov. 28, 2014 photo, a member of Hondura's Military Police, stands guard at the entrance of a school, during the last day of class, in the Canaan neighborhood of Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

In Honduran schools, GANGS ARE IN CONTROL

By ALBERTO ARCE
Associated Press

Teachers who don't pay, don't teach.

Gang prevention police distribute US-funded pamphlets on manners and anger management in about two thirds of the 130 public schools of Tegucigalpa. Gang members, meanwhile, circulate catalogues of their girls offering sexual services for sale.

It can't exactly be said that street gangs are recruiting in Honduran schools because gangs in Honduras don't need to recruit. In a country of limited opportunities, more schoolchildren want to join the violent Mara Salvatrucha, 18th Street and other newly formed gangs than the illegal bands can absorb.

What can be said is that, just as they control most of the neighborhoods of Tegucigalpa, street gangs rule over most public schools in the capital. Gangsters are students and students are gangsters, as are some of their parents. The gangs lay claim to buildings with graffiti, and monitor the movements of police who are trying to monitor them. When the government sends in the military to retake a neighborhood and its schools, the ruling gang may lay low for a time, but they can't stay quiet for long or competitors will move in, setting off a wave of violence.

"The schools are a base of organization for the gangs, and the point through which all children in the neighborhood pass," said Lt. Col. Santos Nolasco, spokesman for the joint military and police force in charge of security in the country of 8.2 million people.

Gangs rely on kids to do much of their illegal grunt work, knowing that even if they get caught, they won't face long jail sentences. More than a third of the estimated 5,000 gang members with criminal charges them against in 2010 were under 15 years old, according to the only study that examines age in gangs. This year, police say they have detained more than 400 minors for gang activity, including some as young as 12.

Poorly educated students may have to repeat a grade several times before passing exams, and police say some gangsters intentionally repeat years just to hold onto illegal operations in a school—their means of making a living. As a result, kids between the ages of 11 and 17 may be in the same class.

While most gang violence takes place outside of school, there have been rapes and kidnappings inside, and extortion is rampant. In addition to setting up the occasional gantlet, where a teacher has to cough up pocket money on the spot, gangs demand that educators pay 1,000 lempiras or about $50 a month, more than 10 percent of their salary.

"The extortion takes place through the school director, " said Liliana Ruiz, the Ministry of Education's director for Tegucigalpa. "They make an appointment with the director at the mall and he has to arrive with the money. In Honduras, the extortion has to be paid."

In many schools, the power of the gangs is omnipresent and once a gang takes control of a school, Ruiz said, the teacher has no choice but to get along with the gangsters, or ask to be moved. If a gang grabs a child from a classroom, most teachers know to keep quiet, even if the student is never heard from again.

"The fear is indescribable ... because these children are capable of anything," Ruiz said. "It is a climate of shocking desperation."

Yojana Corrales, a police officer with the capital's gang prevention unit, stops to speak with neighbors outside of El Sitio school for grades one through nine in northern Tegucigalpa, and immediately draws the attention of gangsters. One pulls up on a motorcycle, another on a bicycle, both carrying two-way radios, and they eavesdrop on her conversation.

"They're just checking up on what we're doing," Corrales explained.

With 15 years on gang details, Corrales is used to the scrutiny.

"We'll go into a school to hand out manuals and the gang will come in, take one and start reviewing it in front of us. They control what is said to the children," she said.

The front of the Jose Ramon Montoya Institute in eastern Tegucigalpa is painted with MS-13 graffiti, tags of the Mara Salvatrucha. Until recently, dozens of gangsters controlled the second floor of this primary and secondary school, using it as a base to sell drugs and organize girls into prostitution.

"They begin with a photo in the halls of the school. Afterward, they take her to a mall to buy her clothes. They give her a cellphone and pay for beauty treatments. If the girls want to get out of this, they're indebted for services rendered and receive threats," said Corrales.

The attraction for the girls, however, is that a 14-year-old can earn $500 a month in prostitution—more than a police officer's salary, Corrales says.

Last year, three students became pregnant after they were raped on the second floor of Montoya, according to a teacher. At the start of the new school year, officials called for protection, but when police tried to take back the school, gangsters threw furniture at them from the second floor. Police then took a softer approach—stationing officers at every door to keep a close eye on students. The gangsters retreated.

For the time being, authorities are back in control of Montoya, including the newly repainted second floor.

"We painted the walls inside the school three weeks ago. They'll come put their tags on them again, and we will paint them again," said teacher Marcio Pastrana. It is a routine he knows well after 35 years at the school.

"There are more good kids than bad," Pastrana reflected. "We do everything humanly possible, but the problem isn't in school, it's in society."

Only about a third of Honduran school children live with two parents, according to administrators. Many of their parents have headed north to look for work in the United States, while others have been killed or simply left the household. Many students don't have enough to eat, or work for several hours before and after school to help support their families. They are surrounded by violence in a country with the world's highest homicide rate.

A majority of Honduran children see a limited future for themselves: work as a laborer, a taxi driver or perhaps as a bus conductor, collecting coins from passengers and earning far less than they might by selling drugs or wielding a gun for the gangs.

Many children leave Honduras out of fear or in search of opportunity in the United States, often long before they finish school. The school districts do not have global dropout numbers, but U.S. Customs and Border Protection says it apprehended 18,244 unaccompanied Honduran children in fiscal year 2014, up dramatically from the previous year, after rumors circulated that they were being allowed to stay in the country.

School administrators say that teachers generally are more afraid of the gangs than the remaining students are, because so many children admire gangsters. In their eyes, the children of gang members are made, and in some neighborhoods, the offspring of two gang members, known as the "pure ones," are royalty. The gangs look for new members who have something to offer them: beauty, bravery or perhaps an empty house.

"An 11-year-old mentions at school that his grandmother has died and he can get the keys to the house that is empty," said Corrales. "The gang grabs the house and begins to use it, and that child doesn't get out of the gang."

Teachers, administrators and police acknowledge that the government's efforts to protect schools with military police and gang prevention programs are not yielding measurable results.

After the leader of a drug gang at the Republic of Panama School in the Buenos Aires neighborhood was killed in September, 20 gangsters were detained and their mates warned of reprisals. Thirty military police were deployed to provide protection, said Lt. Col. Nolasco. The result of the arrests, said a group of 11- to 14-year-olds, speaking on condition of anonymity, was more danger as another gang tried to muscle in.

"The situation is more complicated now," said a student.

Corrales, the gang prevention officer, arrived at the La Hera school in the northern neighborhood by the same name, on a recent afternoon to distribute her prevention handbooks and meet with the kids. Before she even got out of her pick-up truck, however, a group of children climbed into the back and put their hands behind their heads, mimicking detained gang members.

"This is the image of the gang leader," Corrales said. "The detainee is a somebody in the barrio, and those kids want to be a somebody."

Good Housekeeping

Porch.com connects remodelers and contractors

By MARCO DELLA CAVA
USA TODAY

About a year ago, Matt Ehrlichman and a few dozen inspired employees were simply trying to help their business take wing.

Convinced that homeowners were eager for a more centralized clearinghouse of information for home-improvement projects, Porch.com launched with the hope of finding a few like-minded souls.

Fast-forward through 2014, and Seattle-based Porch has shot up like a skyscraper. Now some 275 employees roam the company's expansive new downtown headquarters, with another few hundred expected to join next year.

That growth is being fueled in part by a partnership with Lowe's, which has trained employees in all 1,700 locations to guide customers to home-improvement professionals in their towns via on-site Porch software.

To date, 2.8 million contractors (10% of them with Porch-verified licenses) and countless amateur remodelers showcase 120 million projects on Porch, totaling some $2.5 trillion in work. Thanks to the reach Lowe's offers, homeowners in 62% of U.S. towns and cities now have access to Porch.

That's quite a leap from a few friends crunching data in a small office.

JAKE COONEY, PORCH.COM

Matt Ehrlichman, 35, is the CEO of Porch.com, a company that links homeowners with contractors.

"We felt there was so much pain in this (business) space, and I suppose the boom in our company just reflects that," says Ehrlichman, 35, who is among 10 finalists in USA TODAY's Entrepreneur of the Year contest. Profiles of the other companies will run in the coming weeks, and a winner will be selected in December. "Our success isn't that magical. It was just a lot of work aggregating all the information necessary to help people with work on their most valuable investment."

The affable founder laughs. "It's no-brainer stuff, really," he says. "Who wouldn't want to know, if you were doing your roof, who your neighbor used and if they liked them?"

More to the point, Porch allows homeowners to assess the costs of projects relative to where they live. "It's about being specific," Ehrlichman says. "It's not just, 'What does a kitchen remodel look like and cost,' but it's what it looks like and costs in your neighborhood."

Such transparency is what Ehrlichman hopes will lead to a more level playing field in the often murky contractor world. By offering professionals a way to brag about their projects in full color through their page, Porch aims to create a platform that allows great and fair craftsmen to thrive. It's a notion that's not unlike what Yelp, TripAdvisor and other companies bring to the customer-review space.

The company generates the bulk of its revenue from a $100-a-month premium subscription model aimed at contractors who want detailed client analytics and leads in their surrounding ZIP codes.

Ehrlichman is a software guy at heart, but a personal project building his family's dream home ultimately led him to put a planned year off on hold and launch Porch. Frustrated that finding and vetting contractors caused so many delays, he felt that the Web could be used to empower homeowners during what often is a daunting and expensive process.

Although starting a company is never easy—Ehrlichman's first attempt was as a teen-ager, when he started a local sports camp in Seattle—he is a firm believer that "the success or failure of your startup is heavily contingent on the competency of your team. To give your company a competitive advantage, you need to hire clear thinkers with the mental horse-power to solve big problems and drive innovation that truly delights your customers."

Now that he's grown his team exponentially over the past year, the founder is taking dead aim at his goal for Porch, which is to be a home network, where we can work across the entire life cycle of the home, creating communication and connections."

Specifically, Porch wants to build out its storytelling capabilities, which will allow homeowners the ability to document any personal and professional work done on a house. If this sounds a bit like creating your home's resume, that's by design.

"We think of us as being like LinkedIn, only for helping you find trustworthy workers for your home project," says Ehrlichman. The end result, he says, will be a richly detailed Web page dedicated to your house, which "will only help come time to sell."

Ehlichman's entrepreneurial track record—he sold his software company, Thriva, to Active Networks in 2011—helped him secure $6.25 million in angel funding for Porch out of the gate. Just a few weeks back, the company closed its second round of $27.6 million led by Lowe's, and is busy securing its next round of funding now.

"We always believed that Porch could solve homeowners' problems differently when it came to home improvement," says Ehrlichman. "Now we're just hanging on for the ride."

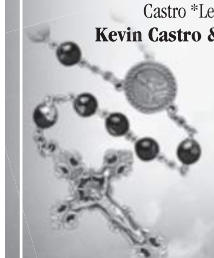
In Loving Memory of

†Virginia Quichocho Castro

July 17 1926 – December 6, 2014
88 years old

In her new life, she now joins her:
Husband: †Deacon Segundo Dela Cruz Castro
Daughters: †Magdalena Q. Castro and †Celina Q. Castro
Parents: †Jesus Siguenza and †Ignacia DLG Quichocho
In-laws: †Joaquin Villagomez and †Ana Dela Cruz Castro

Her loving memories will forever live in the hearts of her siblings, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren…
Sister: Maria Q. Cruz and family
Brother: Ramon DLG Quichocho and family
Children:
Jesus Q. Castro
Joaquin & Lesley Castro*Isaiah Castro *Daniel Castro
(†) Margarita Atalig Castro**-*Dorsha and Luis Moreno (Jasha and Torren) *Xavier & Mae Castro (Maiana, Samaya, Lorenzo and Giovani) *Deanna & Phil Sablan (Jordan, Reece and Nathaniel) *Dionne Castro (Kiara) *Donna & Joe Camacho (Tori and Ava) *Christopher Castro
Gregorio & Ofelia Castro *Desiree Castro *Irish Castro *Geoff Castro
****Generosa Manglona Castro**-*Gregory & Teresa Castro (Kara) *Jenny & Craig Thomas (Kayla, Tani and Gage) *Jemmy & Alexandra Castro (Shady, Dashyll and Shaya) *Yolanda & Burt Clement (Joseph and Cali)
Anicia & Jesus R.A. Sonoda *Stephen & Lisa Stettenbenz (Malia, Kainoa, Kayla and Lauren) *Craig & Marisol Sonoda (Isa, Kaia and Makeo) *Erica & Thomas Thornburgh (Mark Sonoda) *Raymond Seiji Sonoda *Jessica "Jik" C. Sonoda
Jose & Concepcion Castro *Jocelyn & Juan (Anastasia and Shardanay) *JQ & Jennifer Castro (Lailani and Kai) *Jay & Sarah Castro (Maxiliano)
Lillian Q. Castro & Bruce Blanton Sr. *Nikkonia Blanton-Mendiola & Rufino Mendiola Jr. (Quipuha and Aiko) *Bruce Jr. & Reena P. Blanton
Magdalena & Raymond Taitano *Leona & Matt Taia Sr. (Matthew Taia Jr, Maalima, Nyla and Leiana) *Louise Lopez (Isaiah and Noah) *Veronica Bisarra *Barbara Bisarra *Keana Taitano
Rosalyn & Jesse Quintanilla *Mikkel & Katie Castro (Ian, Zion, Dartanan and Kiannen) *Malyssa Q. Castro (Elialyn, Ziggy and Zayne) *Joshua Q. Castro
Alfredo & Margaret Castro *Kimberlyn & Ryan Sr. Fowler (Victoria, Liyah and Ryan Jr.) *Virginia-Ann Castro & Noel Santos (Keolani, Mary and Noel Jr.) *Alfred Jr & Trish (Thomas, Tyler, Aiden Jay, Ketoryah and Kayleah) *Flavian and Shanalyn Castro (Vicente and Richard) *Abraham & Joelene Castro (Aria)
Segundo & Celina T. Castro *Steven Castro*Segundo Castro *Virginia P. Castro (Destiny and Candy) *Tia Maria & Joaquin Dela Cruz (Melvin, Joaquin, Tomi and Akina) *Faith Castro *Xang Castro *Mailee Castro *Mayline Castro
Celina & Richard Farrell Sr. *Tiona & Rian Jones *Anthony Randall *Richeena Farrell & John Ramos *Rikkie Farrell & Renebhoy Benghit *Richard Farrell Jr.
Lee & Cherry R. Castro *Christine Leigh & Danny Concepcion (Kyra, Khamia and Kevaeha) *RJ C. Castro *Paula Chelee R. Castro *Lee Vicente R. Castro *Lee R. Castro Jr. *Yvette Leeanne R. Castro
Kevin Castro & Takakazu "Kaz" Saishu



Nightly rosaries are being offered at the San Jose Church in Tinian at 8pm until December 14th and on December 15th Mass will be held at San Jose Church at 6pm.
On Tuesday, December 16, 2014, her remains will be escorted to San Jose Church. Final viewing and last respects will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. followed by interment.

Your thoughts, prayers, and presence are greatly appreciated.

The Family

THIS IS A HAMMER

Salvaging a fire pit

By SAMANTHA MAZZOTTA
KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Q: My parents have a free-standing copper fire pit in their backyard that they never use—except when we visit. They refuse to cover it up, so the pit fills with water, the copper discolors and the grates rust. Every year I end up buying replacement grates so we can enjoy the fire pit. It's something my wife and kids look forward to when we visit Arizona, since it's far too cold in Minnesota to sit outside in the winter. Is there a better way to protect the fire pit long-term when we're not around?—Derek M., Duluth, Minn.

A: To be honest, it's really your parents' call as to how well they want to take care of their fire pit. Do they take care of the rest of their outdoor equipment and their yard? If so, chances are that they keep that pit there just for you.

I'd recommend that you talk with them first about taking care of it. Do they use it at other times during the year? Would they prefer that it be stored completely away when you're not visiting? Or do they like it and just never get around to using it? Finally, when it fills with water, is it too heavy for them to empty right away?

It sounds like a good-quality fire pit, since you haven't had to do any repairs on the copper pit itself. What I'd recommend is that you purchase a replacement grate and grill top as usual, but look for products that resist rust.

Before you leave for home, clean the fire pit out completely (making sure first that all the ashes are stone cold). Brush the grill and grates free of ashes and melted marshmallow, and store them in a shed or garage.

After your talk with your parents, if they keep it around only for you, then store the fire pit in a sheltered spot or in a shed. If they want to keep it outside, buy a cover for it. I'm presuming that the bottom of the fire pit does not have an outlet for ashes or drainage. If it does, leave that outlet open.

HOME TIP: Pressure-treated wood emits toxic gasses when burned. If it has a greenish tint, it may be pressure treated. If you're not sure, DON'T burn it!

Send your questions or home tips to ask@thisisahammer.com.

COMFORT FOODS

Impossible No-Crust Pumpkin-Pecan Pie

By HEALTHY EXCHANGES
KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

If you love pumpkin pie, then you'll agree that the season for this great treat is way too short! Here's an ultra-easy pie made without a crust.

- 1/2 cup reduced-fat biscuit baking mix
- Sugar substitute to equal 3/4 cup sugar, suitable for baking
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 1/3 cups nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons no-fat sour cream
- 2 eggs or equivalent in egg substitute
- 1 (15-ounce) can solid-packed pumpkin
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup reduced-calorie whipped topping

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate with butter-flavored cooking spray.

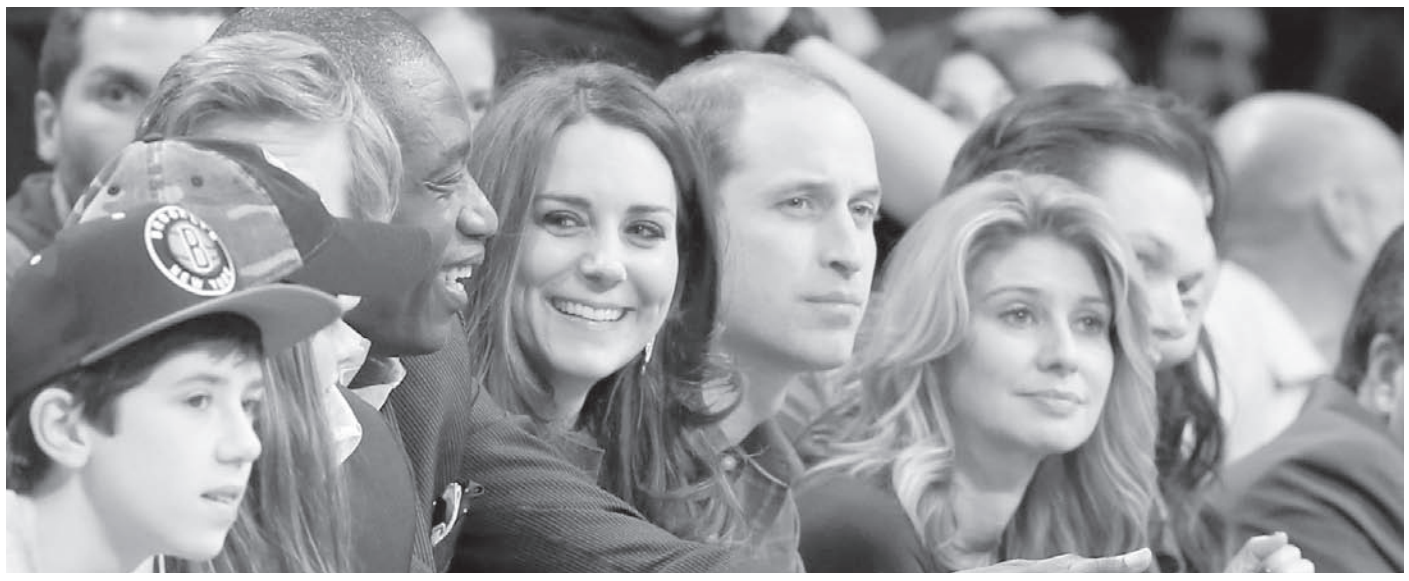
2. In a small bowl, combine baking mix, sugar substitute and pumpkin pie spice. In a large bowl, combine dry milk powder and water. Stir in vanilla extract, sour cream, eggs and pumpkin. Add baking mix mixture. Mix well to combine. Fold in pecans. Spread mixture evenly into prepared pie plate. Bake for 50 to 55 minutes or until a knife inserted near center comes out clean.

3. Place pie plate on a wire rack and let sit for 30 minutes. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours. When serving, top each piece with 1 tablespoon whipped topping. Makes 8 servings.

- *Each serving equals: 140 calories, 4g fat, 7g protein, 19g carb., 194mg sodium, 3g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch, 1/2 Fat-Free Milk, 1/2 Fat.*

Life & Style

Kate visits NYC kids; Prince William joins Obama in the WH



AP

Former Houston Rockets player Dikembe Mutombo, fourth from left, talks to Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, who sits beside him and Britain's Prince William, during an NBA basketball game between the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Brooklyn Nets at the Barclays Center in New York, Monday, Dec. 8, 2014.

NEW YORK (AP)—Britain's Prince William sat down with President Barack Obama in Washington on Monday and unveiled an effort to curtail illegal wildlife trading while his wife, Kate, made an impression of a down-to-earth duchess on preschoolers and prominent British expats in New York.

In the first full—very full—day of the popular royal couple's first visit to either place, William went to the White House and spoke at a World Bank conference. Kate wrapped Christmas gifts and helped children decorate picture frames while touring a child development center with New York City's first lady, then talked technology, theater and more with a British-success-story guest list at a lunch at the consul general's home.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are on their first official trip to the U.S. since 2011. William, speaking at the World Bank, announced a new task force to develop recommendations within a year on how the transportation industry can help stop wildlife trafficking, calling it "one of the most insidious forms of corruption and criminality."

Meanwhile, the duchess and city first lady Chirlane McCray met with families and heard about the work of the Northside Center for Child Development, which offers mental health and educational services.

"Very nice to meet you," Kate told a classroom of 3- and 4-year-olds, who were embellishing picture frames with stickers.

After encouraging a boy named Sammy in his work, the duchess, who is expecting the couple's second child, turned to a girl named April.

"Where should I put this one?" Kate asked, affixing a sticker.

Kate and the first lady later wrapped children's Christmas presents in the center's gymnasium, with Kate joking that she hoped she'd be given a square package to tackle.

Later, Kate chatted with lunch guests including actor Matthew Rhys, TV and theater producer Colin Callender, Parsons The New School of Design fashion dean Simon Collins and tech news site Mashable founder Pete Cashmore. She asked how Callender's recent New York staging of "Macbeth" had been received and told Cashmore his "must be such an exciting industry to be a part of."

The royals also attended an early evening reception highlighting wildlife conservation efforts with former U.S. first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and her daughter, Chelsea Clinton.

During the event at the British consul general's residence, William made a brief speech on the plight of the world's most iconic species being "butchered in the name of trinkets and medicine" before ending it on a lighter note.

"I'm off to shoot some hoops now, or whatever it is you Americans say," he quipped.

The royals' schedule for their three-day trip includes a visit to the National Sept. 11 Memorial and Museum, a visit to showcase arts education at a youth organization, a Cleveland Cavaliers-Brooklyn Nets game and a black-tie fundraiser for their alma mater, the University of St. Andrews.

Kate, dressed in a black coat by the British fashion brand Goat, was greeted with cheers from several dozen spectators as she arrived at the Northside Center. Aaron Victor and wife Crystal Pizarro had waited almost an hour on a freezing day with their 3-year-old daughter, London, to catch a glimpse of the duchess.

"It was a very good experience, and I'm glad she got to see her," Pizarro said.

The royals are visiting a city where thousands of people have protested over the past week to decry a grand jury's decision not to indict a white police officer in the chokehold death of an unarmed black man, Eric Garner. More than 200 activists demonstrated outside the basketball arena while the royals took in the game.

Cavaliers star LeBron James wore a T-shirt saying "I can't breathe," a rallying cry that has developed around Garner's last words, before Monday's game. He was joined by Cavaliers player Kyrie Irving and several Nets players.

Earlier, James had said that playing with William and Kate in the audience would be "a huge honor."

As the royal couple headed to their seats during the third quarter, fans stood and cheered. The royals were shown on the overhead scoreboard during a stoppage of play. Kate, wearing a grey jacket, waved to the camera as the crowd roared. Jay-Z and Beyonce were led across the court between the third and fourth quarters to chat with them.

DEATH AND FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

†MARIA VILLAGOMEZ PANGELINAN

Lovingly known as "Marian Dabid"

Born on May 6, 1944 and was called to her eternal rest on December 4, 2014 at age 70.

In her new life, she now joins her:

Father: †Felix Cruz Villagomez
Mother: †Cresencia Borja Villagomez
Ex-Husband: †David Edward Pangelinan
Daughter: †Jeanette Villagomez Pangelinan

She is survived by her Children, Grandchildren & Great Grandchildren:

- Steven Pangelinan & Gina Cabrera (Ashley, Steven Jr.)
- Jane & Dionicio Lizama (Janel/Christopher [Bethany, Brooke, Britney, Brianna], Jennifer [Damien Edward], Jackelyn, David, Dionicio Jr., Antonia)
- Maryann & Tony Morrison

Brothers & Sisters:
Jose & Victoria Villagomez, Antonio & Rosa Villagomez, Marina & †Abel Atalig, Manuel & Patricia Villagomez, Bernadita & Ramon Manahane, Ricardo & †Verna Villagomez, †Freddy Villagomez, Engracia & †Antonio Aldan, Elizabeth & Roberto Manalo, Jacinta & †Manuel DeGracia, Ramon Villagomez, †Felix & †Eufrisa Villagomez, Lucia & Jose Sablan

Mass of Intention is being offered nightly at Santa Soledad Church at 6:00pm followed by rosary. The late Maria Pangelinan's body will depart Borja Funeral Home on December 15, 2014 at 7:30am and will proceed to Mount Carmel Cathedral.
Last respects will be held from 8:30 to 10:30am.
Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00am, and she will be laid to rest at the Mt. Carmel Cemetery thereafter.

Your thoughts, prayers, and presence are greatly appreciated,

From the Family

Chicago museum lifts lid on Egyptian mummy coffin

CHICAGO (AP)—Not until the lid was off the wood coffin—exposing the 2,500-year-old mummified remains of a 14-year-old Egyptian boy—could J.P. Brown relax.

The conservator at Chicago's Field Museum and three other scientists had just employed specially created clamps as a cradle to raise the fragile coffin lid. Wearing blue surgical gloves, they lifted the contraption and delicately walked it to safe spot on a table in a humidity-controlled lab.

"Sweet!" Brown said after helping set the lid down, before later acknowledging the stress. "Oh yeah, god, I was nervous."

The much-planned procedure Friday at the museum, revealing the burial mask and blackened toes of Minirdis, the son of a priest, will allow museum conservators to stabilize the mummy so it can travel in an upcoming exhibit.

"Mummies: Images of the Afterlife" is expected to premier in September at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, then travel to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in fall 2016.

AP

In this photo taken Friday, Dec. 5, 2014, in Chicago, the mummified body of Minirdis, a 14-year-old Egyptian boy and his exposed toes lie in his opened coffin after J.P. Brown and his team of curators at the Field Museum opened the coffin for the first time to begin a conservation process on the 2,500-year-old boy before it becomes part of a traveling exhibition.

The Field Museum has had the mummy since the 1920s, when the institution received it from the Chicago Historical Society. It's part of the museum's collection of 30 complete human mummies from Egypt.

"There's always a risk of damage," said Brown, who works in a lab filled with plastic-covered examination tables behind a large window that allows schoolchildren to watch him work. "So we like to handle these things as little as possible."

Even before opening the coffin, the conservators knew some of what to expect. CT scans, which make X-ray images allowing scientists to see inside, showed the boy's feet were detached and partially unwrapped with his toes sticking out. His shroud and mask were torn and twisted sideways. Those also will be repaired.

Pieces of the coffin had previously gone missing, so the mummy had been exposed to the elements before. For that reason, Brown wasn't worried about the mummy scattering to dust when the lid came off—a notion familiar to moviegoers.

Obama riffs on his presidency with Stephen Colbert

WASHINGTON (AP)—His daughters mock his big ears, he leaves his socks on the floor and sitting behind Stephen Colbert's desk, he said, gives him a greater sense of power.

When President Barack Obama was not seriously defending his economic record, his executive actions on immigration and his delayed decision on the Keystone XL oil pipeline Monday on "The Colbert Report," he was playfully confiding that the trappings of the presidency really don't go to his head.

"When I go home, Michelle, Malia and Sasha give me a hard time," he told host Stephen Colbert. "There are no trumpets, and they tease me mercilessly."

It was Obama's third appearance on the show, his second as president, and marked the beginning of the final two weeks for the Comedy Central program. Colbert will take over for David Letterman on CBS' "Late Show" next year.

Obama kicked off the show sitting in for Colbert to perform a regular feature of the program called "the Word" wherein Colbert's rants are accompanied by snarky messages to the audience.

So when Obama, as Colbert, declared that there are aspects of "Obamacare" that people from both parties actually like, the text aside to the audience read: "Everything but the Obama."

Later, Colbert observed that the economy had been creating more jobs of late.

"You have employed a lot of people—mostly as secretary of defense," Colbert cracked in a reference to Obama recently nominating his fourth top civilian at the Pentagon.

"That's boosted our numbers a little bit," Obama replied.

Colbert, whose on-screen persona is that of an insufferable conservative scold, accused Obama of exceeding his authority on immigration. "When did you decide to burn the Constitution and become emperor?" he asked. The question was heard as a joke by many in the audience at George Washington University. But to Obama's critics, the question had a ring of truth.

Q&A: Chris Rock on 'Top Five,' Obama and fame

NEW YORK (AP)—With his latest and best film in tow, Chris Rock is back in the spotlight right when we most need him.

There's no more salient voice on race in America, not to mention most other things in America, too: marriage, sports, Kanye West. As Rock has prepared to release his film "Top Five" on Dec. 12, his commentary on the grand jury verdicts in Ferguson and New York has been trenchant, and criticism of the movie business—"a white industry," he called it in an essay for the Hollywood Reporter—has been like water in the desert of a (publicly) tight-lipped Hollywood. Rock is on a truth-telling spree.

And for the first time, Rock has found a way to funnel his strong voice into a fiction film of his own. "Top Five," a comedy that sparked a bidding war at the Toronto International Film Festival, is a big-screen breakthrough for the stand-up. Excepting his excellent documentary "Good Hair," Rock's previous films ("Head of State," "I Think I Love My Wife") were disappointments.

But he's clearly thrilled about "Top Five," a romp through celebrity and New York. Rock plays a version of himself, Andre Allen, a comic attempting to turn serious filmmaker.

Allawi

In person, Rock appears far younger than the 50 he'll turn in February: "It's a rich 50," he says. "Rich 50 is about 35. Money's the best lotion in the world." Over tea recently, he was as animated and forthcoming as usual:

AP: Do you feel as though you've finally cracked this nut, fitting yourself into your own movie?

Rock: I've got to do it again, but it feels like when I did my big "Bring the Pain" special for HBO. You've got to learn from your failures. You've got to really, really take them in. You can't shrug them off. You can't blame them on anyone else. You can't go, "Oh, that day it snowed!"

AP: Did doing the Broadway play "M———- With the Hat," which you've said was the most fun you ever had in show business, help lead to "Top Five"?

Rock: It just made me write characters. I look at the other movies I made, it wasn't even like I was making movies. I was making posters. Like: Black guy runs for president—poster! Some of them worked, some of them didn't, but Andre Allen is a real guy, not like a guy just to service this movie. Even something like "I Think I Love My Wife," he was the husband representative.

AP: It must have changed you as a performer, too, being accustom to looking out at the audience.

Rock: Before we went out every night, Bobby (Cannavale) would lead and go, "Four walls. It's just us. Four walls. They're not there. Four walls." I realized in my acting, in all the movies, I was always playing the crowd. Even in a freaking movie, I'm kind of playing the crowd. Just the phrase "four walls." I say it all the time. I said it while I was making "Top Five." I'm really acting with somebody as opposed to Bob Hope-ing it.

AP: You seem to be a student of standups who have succeeded in other mediums, "Seinfeld," "Curb Your Enthusiasm," Woody Allen films and Adam Sandler's movies.

Rock: I definitely watched all of those things before making this movie. I thought it was interesting that no one had made a movie like "Curb." I love "Stardust Memories." Love it, love it, love it. In a weird way, this movie is a combination of "Stardust Memories" and one of those (Richard) Linklater, Julie Delpy, Ethan Hawke walking around movies.

AP: You've said "Top Five" is partially about "black fame."

Rock: The black performer has a responsibility to the community that frankly white performers don't have. They just get to be actors and writers and whatever. They get to pretty much do whatever they want. Hey, I love "Dumb Dumber." I love both of them. You can't be black and do the same thing. "I can't believe you're talking out of your ass! You're setting us back!" Even the concept of role model. You never hear white people are good role models. Never. The term role model is racist because it implies that my good behavior is not natural, that I am behaving just to help out my people. I don't hit my wife because that's not something I do, not because I'm trying to help the race.

AP: Do you think those different standards have also applied to President Barack Obama?

Rock: Michael Jordan was drafted third. The Houston Rockets drafted Hakeen Olajuwon. He's a hall of famer! They're fine. They're happy. Yes, so Obama's not Jordan. Obama's Olajuwon. Won the championship! We wanted Muhammad Ali, we got Sugar Ray Leonard. Sugar Ray Leonard's f——— good!

'Eaten Alive' watched by 4.1 million viewers

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Discovery Channel's "Eaten Alive" special that pitted snake against man drew more than 4 million viewers, but not all considered it time well spent.

Although the title and a promotional video indicated that naturalist Paul Rosolie would be swallowed by a giant anaconda, Sunday's pre-taped special didn't go that far.

Rosolie, described by Discovery as a snake researcher and conservationist, ended his Amazon jungle encounter with the snake after it encircled his body and began squeezing. Wearing bulky protective gear, Rosolie escaped with a sore arm but uneaten.

Online, some viewers jeered the show for falling short of its promise. One posting showed a photo of a mild-looking dog nibbling on a person's finger, accompanied by a request for their own Discovery show.

Lisa Lange, senior vice president for the animal rights group PETA, said the special included the "inexcusable torment" of a wild anaconda and other snakes and was a "shameful stunt" done for ratings.

Discovery has said the snake was unharmed, and the channel declined to comment on PETA's criticism.

Responding to disappointed viewers, Discovery said Rosolie created the challenge to draw attention to an endangered part of the world and it was his "absolute intention to be eaten alive."

Cosby performance in Iowa postponed indefinitely

LOS ANGELES (AP)—An Iowa venue says a Bill Cosby performance scheduled for next year has been postponed indefinitely.

The Des Moines Civic Center said Monday it notified ticketholders that they will receive a refund for the planned March 7 concert.

Cosby stage shows have been canceled in several other states. The actions follow renewed allegations by women claiming decades-old sexual assaults by the 77-year-old comedian.

Cosby has denied the allegations.

Last week, Los Angeles police opened an investigation into a woman's claims that Cosby molested her in 1974, when she was 15 years old. The woman, Judy Huth, is suing Cosby for sexual battery.

Cosby has never been charged with a crime and settled the only other sexual assault case against him. That case was filed by Andrea Constand, a former worker at Temple University in Philadelphia.

'Happy,' 'Frozen' top iTunes end of year list

NEW YORK (AP)—The soundtrack for "Frozen" and Pharrell's viral "Happy" are the year's top-selling album and song on iTunes.

Apple announced Monday that Taylor Swift's "1989," just released in October, is behind "Frozen." Coldplay's "Ghost Stories," Sam Smith's "In the Lonely Hour" and the "Guardians of the Galaxy" soundtrack round out the Top 5 albums.

John Legend's "All of Me," Katy Perry's "Dark Horse," "Talk Dirty" by Jason Derulo and Iggy Azalea's "Fancy" follow "Happy" on the songs list.

"Frozen" is the year's best-selling movie and season three of "Game of Thrones" is the top TV show.

The top paid and free apps for the iPhone are Heads Up! and Facebook Messenger. The top paid and free apps for the iPad are Minecraft—Pocket Edition and YouTube.

John Green's 2012 novel, "The Fault in Our Stars"—which had a film adaption this year—is the top fiction book. "Flash Boys: A Wall Street Revolt" and "Private" are No. 1 for non-fiction and free books, respectively.

Apple also released an editorial list, naming Swift's "1989" best album of the year. Beyonce earned top overall artist and Azalea's "Fancy" best song.

Independent film will dramatize Obamas' 1st date

NEW YORK (AP)—An independent film that will dramatize President Barack Obama's first date with Michelle Obama is in the works.

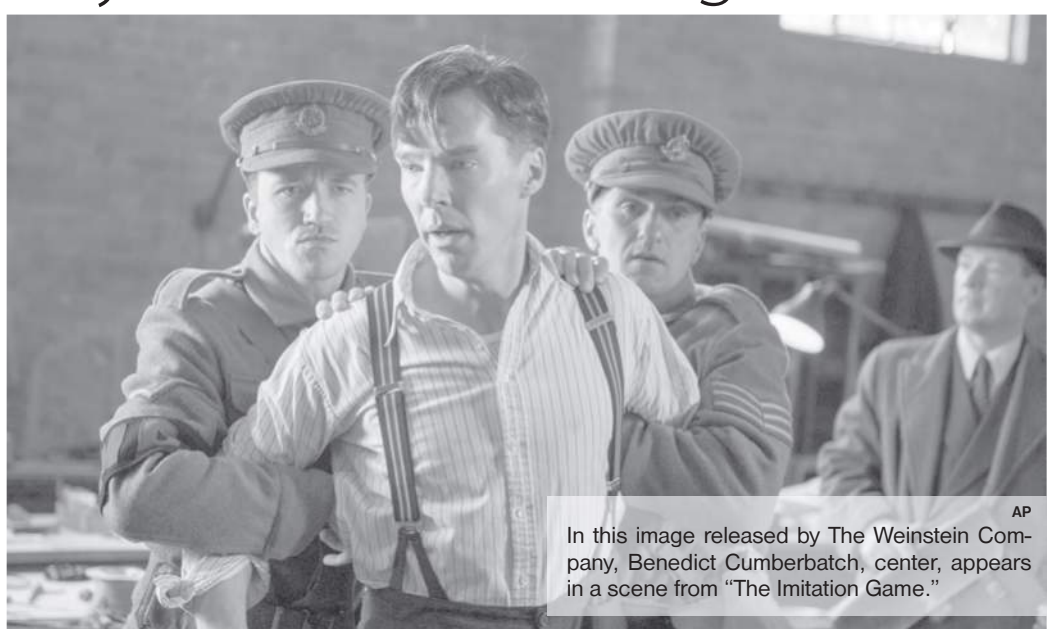
Producer Stephanie Allain confirmed Monday that she and producer Tracey Bing are developing "Southside With You," a drama about the first summer afternoon the Obamas spent together. Tika Sumpter will play the future first lady. The search is on for an actor to play the young president-to-be.

Richard Tanne will write and direct the film.

The Obamas' first date took place in 1989 in Chicago when both were working at the law firm Sidley Austin. They visited the Art Institute of Chicago and went to see Spike Lee's "Do the Right Thing."

Deadline Hollywood first reported on the plans for the film.

'Boyhood,''Selma' among AFI movies of the year



AP

In this image released by The Weinstein Company, Benedict Cumberbatch, center, appears in a scene from "The Imitation Game."

NEW YORK (AP)—The American Film Institute on Monday named the coming-of-age tale "Boyhood," the sci-fi epic "Interstellar" and the civil-rights drama "Selma" among its top movies of the year.

The AFI actually chose 11 movies for its annual top 10 list.

The group's other choices were: Angelina Jolie's World War II drama, "Unbroken"; the wrestling drama "Foxcatcher"; the show business satire "Birdman"; the Disney musical "Into the Woods"; the Los Angeles noir "Nightcrawler"; the jazz school drama "Whiplash"; Clint Eastwood's Navy SEAL thriller, "American Sniper"; and the World War II code-breaker tale "The Imitation Game."

The honors mark a non-competitive reprieve from Hollywood's award season, as well as a preview of what the best picture category could theoretically look like at the Academy Awards. (The Oscars best picture category includes five to 10 films, depending on voting.)

Films that may vie for a best picture nod that the AFI overlooked include the Stephen Hawking biopic "The Theory of Everything," the Gillian Flynn adaptation "Gone Girl" and Wes Anderson's "The Grand Budapest Hotel."

In early awards, Richard Linklater's "Boyhood," filmed over 12 years, has emerged as the front runner. It was chosen as the year's best film by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association and the New York Film Critics Circle. The race will take another turn Thursday when nominations are announced for the Golden Globes.

The AFI also named its top 10 television shows of the year: "The Americans," "Fargo," "Game of Thrones," "How to Get Away With Murder," "Jane the Virgin," "The Knick," "Mad Men," "Orange Is the New Black," "Silicon Valley" and "Transparent."

The AFI Awards are chosen by a jury made up of the institute's trustees, critics and scholars. They will be handed out at a Jan. 11 luncheon in Los Angeles.

Jenni Rivera's estate sues over fatal plane crash

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The estate of Mexican-American superstar Jenni Rivera on Monday sued the owners of a Learjet that crashed two years ago, killing the singer and several members of her entourage.

The negligence case is against Starwood Management Inc., which owned the Learjet 25 jet that crashed in northern Mexico in December 2012 after plunging more than 28,000 feet. The case is also against the companies that serviced the aircraft, Bombardier Inc. and Learjet Inc.

Rivera's company has been sued along with Starwood by relatives of those killed in the crash, including her attorney, hairstylist, publicist and makeup artist and one of the plane's pilots. Attorneys are scheduled to update a judge Wednesday on the progress of settlement talks between Rivera's company and the relatives.

Rivera

A representative for Starwood could not be found. An attorney representing the company left the case earlier this year and has not been replaced.

An after-hours message left for Quebec-based Bombardier was not immediately returned.

Rivera, 43, was known as the "Diva de la Banda" and died as her career was peaking. She was perhaps the most successful female singer in grupero, a male-dominated Mexico regional style, and had moved into acting and reality television.

Rivera had sold more than 15 million records over her career.

Rivera's parents and five of her children, two of whom are still minors, are plaintiffs in the case. The suit seeks unspecified damages on their behalf.

Rivera's widower, former Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Esteban Loaiza, also had sued Starwood for wrongful death. A request by his attorneys to dismiss the case was granted in late October, court records show. Loiaza's suit contended the pilots flying Rivera and her entourage were not properly licensed for the flight and that the plane's airframe was damaged in a 2005 accident.

Wife's birthday gag gift turns out to be a turn-on

DEAR ABBY: A few months ago, I turned 50 and my co-workers held a small celebration. When we celebrate birthdays, we all have agreed to regift an item (usually a gag gift).

One of my presents was a black leather miniskirt and matching vest. I never planned on wearing it, but my husband, "Tom," and I were invited to an '80s-themed Halloween party and I didn't want to spend a lot of money on a costume, so we decided to go as a rock star and his groupie.

I left work early to get ready for the party. When Tom arrived home, he couldn't keep his eyes or hands off me. We never made it to the party and had the best sex we'd had in years. Before that night, our love life had been practically nonexistent.

Abby, please remind readers to always keep intimacy in their relationships. Apparently, Tom and I just needed to be creative and spice things up a little.

HAPPIER IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR HAPPIER: That's a great suggestion. Now I know why your jack-o'-lantern was smiling.

DEAR ABBY: I was married for six years and had three children with my husband. He always said he hated people who cheat on their spouse, but then he had an affair with a married co-worker, a woman who had three kids. We had a huge argument about it. I called her names and he beat me up. I called the police, he was arrested, jailed, and I filed for divorce.

It has been six years and I have moved on, but I'm still angry over their cheating. They got married and invited mutual friends who knew of their affair. All of them attended the wedding.

When I questioned a few of them about why they didn't tell me he was cheating on me, they said it was "none of their business." (Oddly enough, those people thought nothing of socializing with the cheaters.)

I'd like to know how many of your readers would tell someone their spouse was cheating. I know I would, because affairs aren't innocent fun.

Just to add to the end of my story, my ex and his trophy wife are now divorcing after three years of marriage. The reason? He caught her cheating!

THE EX-MRS. IN ILLINOIS

DEAR EX-MRS.: These "friends" may not have told you because they either didn't want to get involved, or they had already chosen whose side they planned to be on.

I suspect many readers will want to chime in on your question. And I also suspect that, unlike years ago when folks opted to remain silent, the majority will say they feel the spouse has a right to know because they would want to be told.

DEAR ABBY: Please provide advice on hugging a woman without it seeming like I am more interested in experiencing a free feel of her breasts than in just hugging her. Any help or suggestions will be appreciated.

HEALTHY AMERICAN MALE

DEAR H.A.M.: If you are hugging women you don't have much of a relationship with, your intention could be misconstrued. If you think your attempt to be warm and friendly might be regarded as making a pass, then you shouldn't do it, or you may be considered less a "healthy American male" than a creepy lecher.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

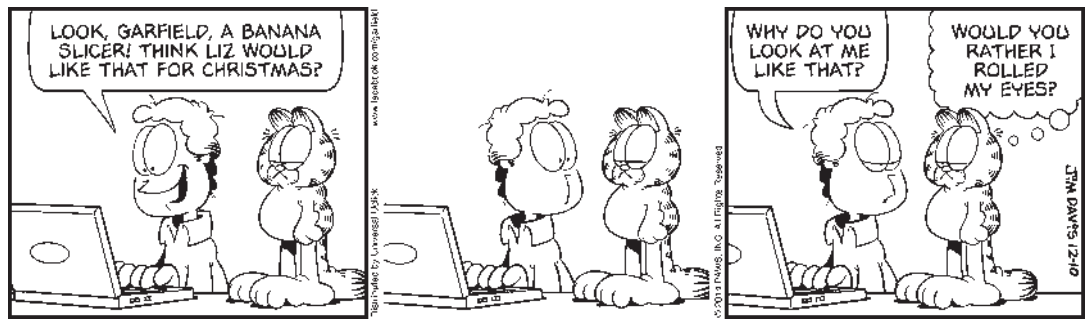
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

THANKS FOR HELPING ME MAIL MY LETTER TO SANTA.
IT SURE WAS HEAVY.
THOSE BIG ENVELOPES ONLY HOLD A COUPLE HUNDRED PAGES. THAT'S WHY I USED A BOX.
I HOPE SANTA DOESN'T THROW HIS BACK OUT WHEN HE GETS IT.
ALL I CAN SAY IS, THIS YEAR, SANTA HAD BETTER BRING EVERYTHING ON MY LIST. I'VE BEEN EXTREMELY GOOD ALL YEAR!
WHAT ABOUT THE NOODLE INCIDENT?
NO ONE CAN PROVE I DID THAT!!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis


LOOK, GARFIELD, A BANANA SLICER! THINK LIZ WOULD LIKE THAT FOR CHRISTMAS?
WHY DO YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT?
WOULD YOU RATHER I ROLLED MY EYES?
JIM DAVIS 12-10

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

HELLO, LITTLE LADY. HOW ARE YOU?
MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW ARE YOU?
I'M... I'M GOOD.
ARE YOU USING HAND SANITIZER?
WELL, I... WEAR GLOVES.
YOU MIGHT LOAD UP ON VITAMIN C.
I'LL BE FINE.
CHILDREN ARE PETRI DISHES! HAVE A DISINFECTANT WIPE.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HEY, THERE'S SOME CHRISTMAS CAROLERS OUTSIDE.
THANK GOODNESS! I WAS STARTING TO WORRY THAT PEOPLE HAD LOST THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS!
HOW MUCH SHOULD WE GIVE THEM?
NOTHING. TURN OFF THE PORCH LIGHT.

CROSSWORD

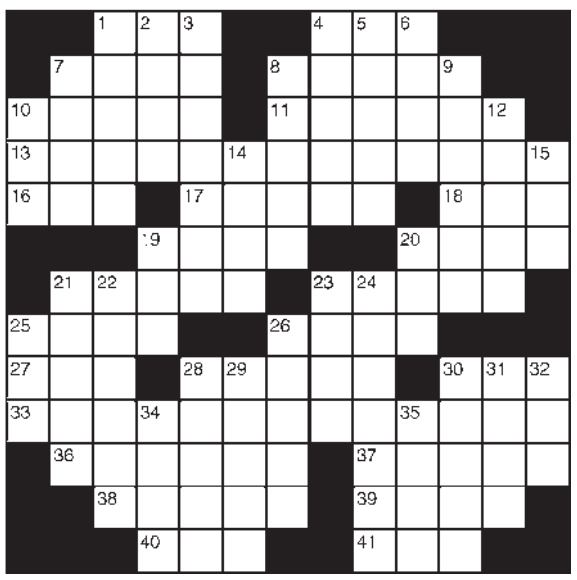
By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 "Modern Family" role
4 Tarzan and Jane's son
7 "Damn Yankees" vamp
8 Crowbar
10 Refuge
11 Garden shrub
13 "An Essay on Man" writer
16 Spring period
17 Ravine
18 Paid player
19 Soccer legend
20 Ponce de —
21 Spin
23 Arab folklore figure
25 Italy's silhouette
26 Pennsylvania port
27 Vagrant
28 Skin-and-bones sort
30 Leap
33 Disaster in the making
36 Ridicule
37 Heart line?
38 Fought the clock
39 Wimp
40 Club —
41 Pigpen

DOWN
1 Small flock of birds
2 Haley or Trebek
3 Boss
4 Watch crystal holder
5 Egg producer
6 Biz-review website
7 Tra- —
8 Tureen accessory
9 Go back into business
10 Overactor
12 Kitchenwear?
14 Void partner
15 A billion years
19 Hole
20 Falsehood
21 Homophone for wood
22 More comfy-cozy
23 Heavy cart
24 Puzzle-making tools
25 Small ammo
26 Goofed up
28 Herb's cousin
29 Relinquished
30 Equine
31 Decides
32 Princess' insomnia cause
34 Stroller
35 Lummox

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-10



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Raven-Symone, 29; Bobby Flay, 50; Nia Peeples, 53; Kenneth Branagh, 54.

Happy Birthday: Let your originality lead the way. You will advance quickly if you follow through with your plans. Take everything you have experienced and put it to good use now. The sky is the limit, and the results can be outstanding if you separate your emotions from what needs to be done. Don't let anyone veer you off track. Your numbers are 4, 18, 25, 27, 30, 32, 45.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't let uncertainty cloud your judgment. Look deep inside and you will find the answers you are looking for. Good fortune will come from your ability to openly discuss any problems or concerns you have. Don't be shy. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Emotions will flare up if you get into arguments and don't maintain your honesty and integrity. Embellishment and indulgence will be the culprits that set situations spinning out of control. Choose self-improvement over criticizing others. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You'll be more focused on having fun than getting things done. Popularity is attainable, but not at the cost of failing in school, at work or taking care of responsibilities. Do what needs to be done first. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Completing tasks will be the goal in order to get ahead professionally, financially or where education is concerned. A trip or mentor will take you on an unexpected journey that will influence your future. Let your intuition guide you. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Embrace a challenge, a playful activity or dealing with youngsters with great enthusiasm, and you will gain wisdom from the experience. You can make changes to how you live while also adding to your knowledge and skills. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Secrets will be revealed, and being prepared to face whatever develops will be necessary if you want to avoid discord. Put greater emphasis on making personal improvements and doing your best to protect and appreciate the ones you love. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Speak your mind and share your thoughts. Don't worry about someone who is trying to bully you into something. Simply say "no" and keep on moving. Take control, make the changes that suit you and don't look back. Put yourself first. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): You must proceed with caution. You may think you have a handle on a situation, but emotions will get stirred up, causing irrational actions. Stick close to home and protect what you've worked so hard to achieve. Learn from past mistakes. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Stick to your plans and fill your day with accomplishments. You will make an impressive display of offering assistance, options and suggestions that will boost your reputation and bring about recognition and rewards. Romance is highlighted and will improve your personal life. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't fold under pressure or give in to demands. You may not like the changes going on around you, but if you stick to what you know, do your best and work quietly behind the scenes, you will come out on top. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Jump into action and take on the role of a leader. Apply for a new position or go above and beyond the call of duty, and you will advance. Love is highlighted, and partnerships will prove beneficial. Expand, explore and experiment. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Put any differences you have aside. You cannot advance if you are constantly fighting everyone around you. Focus on truth, talent and adjusting your skills to suit the current economic climate. Aim to fix and stabilize instead of destroying and starting over. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are entertaining, popular and persistent. You are worldly and wise.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	6	9				2	8	
8			7		6			1
1			8					5
2			9					3
	5	8				9	1	
3			5					4
9			1					8
7			6		5			2
	2	1				4	5	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/10

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	1	8	4	6	3	7	5	9
7	5	9	1	8	2	3	4	6
6	3	4	7	5	9	1	8	2
4	7	5	6	3	8	9	2	1
8	2	6	9	7	1	4	3	5
1	9	3	5	2	4	8	6	7
5	4	1	8	9	6	2	7	3
9	6	2	3	4	7	5	1	8
3	8	7	2	1	5	6	9	4

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/10

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

SHIPYARDS Solution: 10 letters

S	C	R	A	P	A	D	A	N	E	S	N	E	A	B
U	P	S	N	A	S	D	K	A	R	A	C	H	I	S
B	O	E	A	I	E	E	I	E	E	G	R	E	M	L
M	R	E	N	N	N	P	V	P	P	H	E	C	Y	I
A	T	Y	D	T	A	I	L	A	A	D	U	A	A	P
R	L	O	A	I	R	P	E	R	I	R	R	L	U	W
I	A	L	O	N	C	O	P	T	R	D	E	P	A	A
N	N	P	N	G	M	Ⓗ	P	S	S	U	N	T	M	Y
E	D	M	H	I	R	Ⓣ	E	W	I	C	I	S	A	L
S	M	E	T	A	L	Ⓐ	K	N	E	K	L	H	T	B
D	O	S	G	A	V	Ⓑ	C	H	A	N	J	I	N	M
L	U	K	V	C	H	A	T	H	A	M	T	P	U	E
I	O	A	A	R	E	G	N	E	S	S	A	P	P	S
U	N	L	E	S	S	E	V	A	N	L	U	H	K	S
B	H	A	R	A	T	I	N	G	A	L	L	S	N	A

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Ananda, Assembly, BAE, Bath, Bharati, Build, Cargo, Chatham, Cranes, Duck, Employees, Ensenada, Hanjin, Havana, Ingalls, Karachi, Keppel, Khulna, Liner, Merge, Metal, Mitsui, Naval, Newport, Painting, Parts, Passenger, Pipe, Place, Portland, Punta Maua, Rapid, Repairs, Rivers, SCRA, Ship, Slipway, Submarines, Tide, Tsakos, Vessel, Yards

Yesterday's Answer: Declutter

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EMPLOYMENT

2-Maintenance & Repair Worker, 4-House worker & 3-Bookkeeper. $6.05/hour. Interested applicants, mail resume to MTO Maintenance at P.O. Box 504053, Saipan MP 96950

---

(1) Farmer. With 3 years experience. If interested, please send resume to HillTop Farm at Mailex 456 P.O. Box 10005 Saipan, MP 96950, 888-6572.

---

1 General Manager (Korean / Japanese cuisine restaurants): $6.05 - $8.50/hr. At least 5 years of cumulative experience as a general manager of restaurants specializing in Korean and Japanese cuisine required. Email resume to chinay-anbian@hanmisaipan.com.

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1 General Manager / Chef (Korean cuisine): $6.05 - $8.50/hr. At least 3 years of experience as a general manager and cook at a restaurant specializing in Korean cuisine required. Email resume to woori@hanmisaipan.com.

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1 General Manager / Floral Designer: $6.05 - $8.50/hr. At least 3 years of experience as a general manager and professional artificial floral designer at an artificial flower shop required. Email resume to okbang@hanmisaipan.com.

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Streaking Packers hold off Falcons rally

AP

Green Bay Packers' Clay Matthews sacks Atlanta Falcons' Matt Ryan during the second half of an NFL football game Monday, Dec. 8, 2014, in Green Bay, Wis.

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP)—Another big first half helped the Green Bay Packers withstand a furious rally by the desperate Atlanta Falcons.

Eddie Lacy ran for a touchdown and caught one of Aaron Rodgers' three TD passes, and Green Bay built a 24-point lead before holding on for a 43-37 victory Monday night.

The Packers (10-3) earned their fifth consecutive victory to stay a game up on Detroit in the NFC North. Atlanta dropped to 5-8, but remained in a first-place tie with New Orleans in the woeful NFC South.

"Good victory tonight, our seventh victory at home this year... 10 victories has always been kind of a benchmark," coach Mike McCarthy said. "In the NFC, 11 wins will probably be more of a benchmark this year."

Julio Jones had a career-best 259 yards receiving for the Falcons before leaving with a hip injury. Jones had a 22-yard touchdown catch in a 20-point fourth quarter that helped Atlanta cut into Green Bay's big lead.

Matt Ryan's 2-yard touchdown pass to Harry Douglas with 2:15 left got Atlanta within six.

But the Packers recovered the ensuing onside kick.

Lacy left in the fourth quarter with bruised hip. Backup running back James Starks effectively ended Atlanta's upset hopes with a 41-yard run to the Falcons 6 with 1:37 left.

Atlanta came frustratingly close to a rare victory in Titletown. Green Bay held on for its seventh home win, but the porous pass defense may have given potential playoff foes some hope that Lambeau Field may not be that impenetrable after all.

"Defensively, a tale of two halves. You have to give Atlanta's offense a lot of credit," McCarthy said. "We have plenty to clean up."

The Falcons did damage even with Jones hobbling on the sideline, appearing to favor his left side.

Ryan threw for 375 yards and four scores, including a 1-yard touchdown catch by Roddy White with 6:20 left that trimmed Green Bay's lead to 40-30.

Mason Crosby kicked a 53-yard field goal with 4:37 left, helping the Packers withstand Atlanta's final punch.

Rodgers finished 24 of 36 for 327 yards. Lacy had 73 yards on 13 carries, and 33 yards on five catches.

The tough running back wiggled from side to side to celebrate his 1-yard touchdown reception with 4:20 left in second quarter. The score was set up by safety Morgan Burnett's interception of Ryan.

The Packers defense nearly got a second pick later in the quarter after tackle Letroy Guion tipped a Ryan pass while being double-teamed. The 315-pound Guion jumped back to try to get the ball off the rebound, but couldn't control it before it hit the ground.

The Falcons then punted two plays later, and the Packers were on their way to a 31-7 halftime lead.

Rodgers sidestepped his way out of a late blitz by Falcons defensive end Kroy Biermann, and then found Jordy Nelson in the back of the end zone for a 10-yard touchdown pass with 24 seconds left.

Green Bay had outscored foes 167-44 before halftime coming into the night.

The Falcons got off to a fast start in the third, with Ryan finding Jones for a 79-yard catch-and-run to the Packers 3. Ryan later hit Eric Weems over the middle on fourth down for a 5-yard touchdown pass.

It was a sign of things to come in the second half before Green Bay was able to hang on at the end.

Indians acquire Moss from Athletics

CLEVELAND (AP)—The Indians addressed the need for more power in their lineup. Now Brandon Moss has to provide it.

Cleveland finalized a trade - the first of the winter meetings - that has been in the works for weeks by acquiring Moss, a first baseman/outfielder and All-Star last season, from the Oakland Athletics on Monday for minor league infielder Joey Wendle.

The 31-year-old Moss batted .234 with 25 homers and 81 RBIs in a career-high 147 games for the A's. The left-handed hitter drew 67 walks and scored 70 runs. Moss hit .268 with 21 homers in the first half of the season to earn his first All-Star selection, but a nagging hip problem cut into his production over the final months.

On Oct. 21, Moss underwent an operation on his hip. Moss said Dr. Thomas Byrd was prepared to perform microfracture surgery but all that he needed was a labrum repair and cartilage cleanup, which should make his rehab somewhat easier.

Moss said his rehab is coming along well and he expects to be cleared to run later this month.

The chance to join the Indians, who contended for a playoff spot until the season's final weekend, excited Moss. He said the club is similar to some of the Oakland teams he has played for.

"There's a great core group of guys and, in all honesty, it reminds me of after 2012, when they brought us all up and we all kind of took off," he said. "That next year in 2013, we had that core group of guys and the young pitching staff and we won the division by a pretty good margin. It reminds me of a team like that. It's a team with a lot of talent and a lot of capability and it's going to be exciting to be a part of it."

Despite the hip issue, Moss, who also has played for Boston, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, finished among the AL leaders in homers, RBIs, extra-base hits and slugging percentage. He played 67 games at first base, 56 in left field and 34 in right for the wild-card winning A's.

"One of the things that attracted us to Brandon is he's got the versatility to play either corner spot in the outfield and first base," Indians general manager Chris Antonetti said at the winter meetings in San Diego.

Acquring Moss to solidfy the middle of the order could mean decreased playing time for David Murphy and Nick Swisher, who hit .208 with eight homers in a season cut short at 97 games because of injuries. The switch-hitter had surgery on both knees in August. With two more years on a four-year, $56 million contract, moving Swisher in a deal likely would be difficult.

"We still expect Nick to be a big part of our team," Antonetti said. "Right now his focus is on getting healthy for the start of spring training."

Moss is eligible for arbitration for the second time after making $4.1 million last season.

He's glad he won't have to play in spacious Oakland Coliseum, where his statistics were not nearly as good as they were on the road.

"I love the fans there," he said. "I hated playing at the Coliseum. "It killed me as a hitter. I know this past year I hit under .200 at home and the year before that I think I hit exactly .200. I've pretty much made my seasons on the road. I'd hit 10 or 11 or 12 home runs there, but it's just a tough place to hit. You don't get rewarded for fly balls unless you absolutely crush the ball."

"It's just a tough place to play, so I'm really excited about playing in a park where I've had some success. I've always enjoyed playing there."

Wendle batted .253 at Double-A Akron last season.

A's general manager Billy Beane said Wendle would be penciled in at Triple-A next season.

The A's traded another All-Star last month, sending third baseman Josh Donaldson to the Toronto Blue Jays for third baseman Brett Lawrie, left-hander Sean Nolin, right-hander Kendall Graveman and minor league shortstop Franklin Barreto.

SIDEBAR

Hammel back to Cubs for $20M, 2 years

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Pitcher Jason Hammel agreed to a $20 million, two-year contract to return to the Chicago Cubs, a person familiar with the negotiations tells The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity Monday because the agreement had not yet been announced. Hammel's deal includes a $12 million club option for 2017 with a $2 million buyout. If the option is exercised, the contract would be worth $30 million for three seasons.

The 32-year-old right-hander was 8-5 with a 2.98 ERA in 17 starts for the Cubs before he was traded to Oakland on July 5 with pitcher Jeff Samardzija. He went 2-6 with a 4.26 ERA for the Athletics.

Seeking its first World Series title since 1908, Chicago is trying to end a streak of five losing seasons. Since the end of the season, the Cubs hired Joe Maddon to replaced Rick Renteria as manager and have been trying to sign free agent pitcher Jon Lester. The long-planned renovation of Wrigley Field began.

Hammel rejoins a solid rotation projected to include Jake Arrieta (10-5 with a 2.53 ERA in 25 starts) and Kyle Hendricks (7-2, 2.46 ERA). The Cubs hope Travis Wood (8-13, 5.03 ERA) regains the form that made him an All-Star in 2013.

Chicago has a pair of All-Stars in first baseman Anthony Rizzo and shortstop Starlin Castro. Javier Baez and Jorge Soler had some positive moments in their first major league action last season, and prospects include third baseman Kris Bryant and shortstop Addison Russell.

Meanwhile, as players and teams waited for Jon Lester to make a decision and start defining the high-end pitching market, baseball's winter meetings opened Monday

"Almost any move that's made has some kind of domino effect, some more pronounced than others," said Andrew Friedman, the Dodgers' new president of baseball operations. "But obviously when you're talking about the bigger guys coming off the board, there's a more pronounced trickle-down effect."

Lester helped Boston go from worst to first and win the 2013 World Series, and then was part of a purge as the Red Sox again dropped to last in the AL East.

"We're still optimistic that he'll be in a Red Sox uniform. There's a lot of history between the Red Sox and Jon," Boston manager John Farrell said. "We obviously have a strong desire to bring him back. And yet, hopefully, this is coming to a little bit of a head here."

In Arizona, the Diamondbacks finalized their $68.5 million, six-year contract with Yasmany Tomas, a 24-year-old Cuban defector the Diamondbacks may move from the outfield to third base.

"Initially, you've got to believe that that's a lot of money to be passing out on any player," new Diamondbacks general manager Dave Stewart said. "And in this day and time when a player has not played here, he's not proven yet here, that makes it even a little bit uncomfortably. But once you get the right information and you've checked the right sources, it makes it a lot easier to make the move."

LeBron, Cavs roll in front of royal audience

AP

Britain's Prince William, left, and Kate, Duchess of Cambridge pose with Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James, right, at the backstage of an NBA basketball game between the Cavaliers and the Brooklyn Nets on Monday, Dec. 8, 2014, in New York

NEW YORK (AP)— LeBron James showed Prince William that it's good to be the King.

James and the Cleveland Cavaliers turned a close game into a clinic after Prince William and his wife, Kate, grabbed courtside seats to watch them, beating the Brooklyn Nets 110-88 on Monday night.

Cleveland outscored Brooklyn 49-27 after Britain's royal couple arrived to cameras flashing, fans roaring and a tie game.

"Yeah, they brought luck to us," James said.

And then James brought gifts to them. He gave the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge cupcakes from a bakery in his hometown of Akron, Ohio and a couple of Cavaliers jerseys: one for their son (Kate is expecting their second child) and another that read ''Cambridge'' on the back.

"It was their first time watching a basketball game, so it was an honor that I would be that guy they decided they wanted to watch," James said.

Kevin Love was shooting free throws when the royal couple emerged from a tunnel with 7:14 remaining in the third quarter. Perhaps distracted by the loud roar, Love missed the second badly, leaving the game tied at 61.

"It was a little bit more of a distraction than people waving towels or waving whatever it is that they do," Love said. "Yes, it was big distraction. I just tried to make the second shot and it ended up being about a foot short."

But James, putting on a show that few others could, threw some sharp passes to go with his nine points in the period and the Cavs cruised from there to their seventh straight victory.

He finished with 18 points after joining Kyrie Irving and some Nets players in wearing ''I Can't Breathe'' shirts during warmups.

That would've been the story most nights, but he had to share it with the royals' arrival during their first visit to New York. They met earlier in the game with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, celebrating a partnership between the Royal Foundation and the league to raise awareness about the importance of international wildlife conservation.

The buzz built as officials began gathering near the tunnel at halftime for the couple, and it may have amped up James, who had a quiet first half but took his game to another level in front of William and Kate, a day after saying it was an ''honor'' to have them watch him play.

James' biggest statement before then came during the pregame layup line. He and Irving, along with Kevin Garnett, Deron Williams and two other Nets, wore warmup shirts in support of the family of Eric Garner, who died July 17 after a police officer placed him in a chokehold when he was being arrested for selling loose, untaxed cigarettes. A recording of Garner's arrest showed him gasping, "I can't breathe"' during the fatal encounter, and thousands have protested a grand jury decision not to indict the officer since the announcement on Wednesday.

"D-Will brought it to the guys that wanted to wear it and support the cause, and the ones that wanted to wear it wore it. I think it is important," Garnett said.

Williams had 13 points and 11 assists but shot 3 for 14 for the Nets, who played without injured starters Brook Lopez and Joe Johnson.

Love had 19 points and 14 rebounds. Dion Waiters came off Cleveland's bench for 26 points.

Irving had just seven points on 2-of-10 shooting. ... Reserve guard Matthew Dellavedova returned after missing more than a month with a sprained ligament in his left knee. Dellavedova, playing in just his fourth game of the season, shot an airball on his first attempt.

Lopez has a strained lower back. Lionel Hollins said he didn't know much beyond an MRI on Sunday showed it was ''not broken.'' Johnson was sidelined by a stomach virus. ... The Nets had won five straight at home against Cleveland.

Entertainers Jay-Z and Beyonce were led across court after the third and fourth quarter to meet with William and Kate. Jay-Z formerly was a part-owner of the Nets and has kept his courtside seats near their bench since selling his stake.

James, on why he wore the "I Can't Breathe" shirt: "It was a message to the family. That I'm sorry for their loss, sorry to his wife. That's what it's about."

Warriors 102, Timberwolves 86

In Minneapolis, Minnesota Timberwolves coach Flip Saunders may have come up with the best description of what it's like to play the Golden State Warriors these days.

"Ever play RISK?"Saunders said, referring to the classic board game. "I feel like I'm Macedonia with two people and I'm surrounded by 50 people and have to roll 12s 49 straight times."

For those unfamiliar with the game of strategy and world domination, that's really, really hard to do. Just like beating the Warriors.

Stephen Curry overcame an off night from long range to score 21 points and seven assists and the Warriors extended their franchise-record winning streak to 13 games with a 102-86 victory over the Timberwolves.

"I'm proud this meant something to us," Curry said. "The streak is what it is, but I think more so we want guys to understand we're playing well and this is a game we should win and kind of just rising to the occasion."

Curry missed six of his seven 3-point attempts, but the top-ranked Warriors' defense forced the short-handed Timberwolves to shoot 36 percent and turn the ball over 19 times to improve to an NBA-best 18-2. Klay Thompson added 21 points and the Warriors breathed a sigh of relief after Andrew Bogut left with a knee injury early in the first quarter.

Bogut left with "right knee irritation," but both he and coach Steve Kerr said they didn't think it was anything serious.

''Bogs is fine," Kerr said.

Andrew Wiggins had 21 points and six rebounds for the Timberwolves, who are playing without three starters and have lost six in a row. Thaddeus Young added 13 points and seven rebounds for Minnesota.

Bogut left the game after just three minutes. He was laboring up and down the court and went back to the locker room with the team's athletic trainers to get checked out.

Every time Bogut leaves the game with any injury is cause for concern. He is the linchpin of their stifling defense, but his seasons have been often derailed by injuries, including last year when fractured ribs kept him from playing in the first-round playoff loss to the Los Angeles Clippers.

Perhaps looking past a short-handed Timberwolves team at the bottom of the Western Conference, the Warriors gave the Wolves every opportunity to stay in the game in the first half. They shot 38 percent, committed 10 of their 17 turnovers and Curry went 0 for 4 from 3-point range.

The Wolves shot just 35.6 percent in the first half and turned it over 13 times to go into the locker room trailing by nine.

Curry missed his first five 3-pointers, but hit one during a 13-0 run in the third quarter that put the game on ice.

"That never happens," Wolves forward Corey Brewer said of Curry's misses. "We had luck with us tonight and just couldn't capitalize."

Hawks 108, Pacers 92

In Indianapolis, Al Horford scored 25 points and Jeff Teague added 21 as Atlanta beat Indiana.

Kyle Korver added 13 points for Atlanta, which has won eight of its last nine games and seven straight.

The Hawks dominated early and never let up as they built a 28-18 first quarter lead. In building that lead Atlanta (14-6) shot 5 of 9 beyond the arc.

The lead went to 21 when Teague made a layup and free throw after with 8:25 to play in the third quarter.

C.J. Miles and Rodney Stuckey each scored 15 points to lead Indiana (7-14). Luis Scola came off the bench to score 12.

The Pacers only lead, 8-7, came at 7:31 of the first quarter.

"Our guys' activity and energy on both ends of the court was good,"Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "We just need to keep getting better and build off that."

The Hawks came out firing from long range. Atlanta was 6 of 13 on 3-pointers during the first half, but struggled in the second half and finished 9 of 21.

"We've had some good first quarters and obviously if we can make a couple threes that will open up the court and maybe allow us to get to the basket," Budenholzer said. ''

The early outside success opened things up inside as the Hawks scored 22 points in the paint in the first half and finished with 48.

The Hawks pushed their lead to 21 points three times. The first time was when Teague scored on a layup, was fouled and hit the freethrow to put Atlanta up 68-47 with 8:25 to play in the third quarter.

Indiana went on a couple of runs. Late in the first half the Pacers went on a 10-2 run to close the gap to 49-39, but the Hawks answered and took a 60-43 lead into the half.

Raptors 112, Nuggets 107 OT

In Toronto, Kyle Lowry had 13 points and 13 assists, and Jonas Valanciunas added 18 points and 12 rebounds as Toronto rallied to beat Denver in overtime.

Lou Williams scored 26 and Amir Johnson had 18 for the Raptors, who trailed by five points with less than three minutes to play but got a game-tying 3-pointer from Patrick Patterson with 28 seconds left.

Patterson finished 5 for 7 from 3-point range, while his teammates were a combined 4 for 26.

Patterson had 19 points and Terrence Ross 16 for Toronto, which leads the Eastern Conference with a 16-5 record.

Wizards 133, Celtics 132 2OT

In Washington, John Wall scored 26 points, including the last 10, as the Washington rallied to beat Boston in double overtime.

Wall added a career-high 17 assists, Paul Pierce scored a season-high 28 points and Marcin Gortat had 21 points and 12 rebounds for Washington, which outlasted the Celtics to salvage the finale of the home-and-home series after losing Sunday in Boston.

Washington squandered a 23-point third-quarter lead before rallying in both overtimes.

Jeff Green led Boston with 28 points, rookie Marcus Smart added a career-high 23 and Kelly Olynyk finished with 19 points and 11 rebounds.

Yu, Lampkin bring Kagman to U21 semis

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Kagman Sparks' 1-2 scoring punch Allan Yu and Jason Lampkin were on target last Monday, lifting their team to a 70-63 playoff win over the Runnin' Rebels in the U21 division game in the 2014 BANMI Youth League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Yu sizzled for 32 points, while Lampkin added 20 as they led Kagman's come-from-behind win and brought the Sparks to the semifinal round.

Kagman was behind by three, 49-52, entering the fourth canto, but went back to the game and successfully stole the lead and the win behind the 10 markers of Yu in the payoff period. Yu's output in the fourth frame was just one point behind the total production of the Runnin' Rebels, who missed pulling off an upset after making only four field goals in the last quarter.

With both teams fighting for dear life, they engaged in a close battle right at the get-go. Kagman clung to a one-point lead after the first period, 16-15, thanks to Yu's 6 straight points that capped the team's scoring.

Yu then opened the second frame with a triple, but he had only Jason Lampkin backing him up, while the Runnin' Rebels drew baskets from multiple players, allowing them to grab the upper hand at the turn, 36-32. Yu and Lampkin combined for 14 of Kagman's 16 points in the second quarter with Bobby Prado making the other 2 points. As for the Runnin' Rebels' side, Earl Ermitanio had 8 points, while five of his teammates contributed at least one basket apiece.

The Runnin' Rebels kept the shaky lead in the third, which they ended by knocking in two triples, one each from Ermitanio and Kenji Abobo. Kagman failed to overhaul the lead in the third, as Yu slowed down a bit, drilling only two field goals and leaving Lampkin to carry the cudgels for the Sparks. Lampkin had 8 markers in the third to keep Kagman afloat.

Yu then fought back in the fourth, scoring 6 of Kagman's last 7 points to power the Sparks past the Runnin' Rebels.

With the win, Kagman joined the two early semifinalist—Sonics and Ol'Aces.

The top-ranked Ol'Aces secured a spot in the Final Four last Thursday after whipping Laly 4, 93-32.

The unbeaten Ol'Aces went on a 26-7 scoring surge in the first period and never looked back to cruise to victory.

Five players hit double figures for the Ol'Aces with big man Jimmy Tudela leading the way with his 18 points. Sylvester Kapileo paced Laly 4 with his 12 markers.

MONDAY

Kagman 70–Yu 32, Lampkin 20, Jo. Santos 8, Palino 4, Prado 2, Je. Santos 1.

Runnin' Rebels 63–Ong 12, Borja 11, Ermitanio 11, Nakashima 8, Abobo 3, De Luna 6, Miller 2.

Scoring by quarters: 16-15, 32-36, 49-52, 70-63.

THURSDAY

Ol'Aces 93–Tudela 18, Borja 18, Yap 13, Sanchez 11, Cristobal 10, Mendoza 8, De Leon 8, Olopai 6.

Laly 4 32–S. Kapileo 12, Rogolifoi 8, Romolor 6, Santo 3, Cangco 3.

Scoring by quarters: 26-7, 51-17, 76-26, 93-32.

Hustlers, Voyagers rule 8-Ball league

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Route33 Armatech Hustlers and the Jokers IT&E Voyagers ruled their respective divisions in the season-ending Budweiser Open 8-Ball League held in various bars last week.

The Hustlers scored a 9-5 win over the Smoke Pub Magic 8 Ball to top the Thursday league, while the Voyagers clinched the Tuesday crown after a masterful 9-2 trouncing of the Smoke Pub Saipan TV Hustlers.

Senen Pangilinan and Jerry Soriano opened up Route33's title campaign by beating the Magic 8 Ball duo of Rodel Dela Cruz and Rey Hermogenes, while Simon Kapileo and Robert Sanciangco made it 2-0 after downing Rick Elefante and Chester Cuento in the two partner's 8-Ball matches.

The Hustlers went up 4-0 after Soriano and Oscar Sablan scored wins over Rico Montano and Hermogenes, respectively. Elefante, Dela Cruz and Cuento put the Magic 8 Ball on the scoreboard following victories over Pangilinan, Sanciangco and Kapileo.

The Dela Cruz and Hermogenes tandem leveled things up after beating Soriano and Pangilinan, but the Hustlers won't be denied of the win as they topped five of the six remaining matches to claim the title.

The Hustlers are already seeded in the Budweiser Cup when they host the Magic 8 Ball on Thursday. The other pairings are between the Jokers Homeboyz and Wild Bills; National Alamo Car Rental and Poseidon Titans; and Jonny's Team SCS and Barcode Breakers.

The Homeboyz clinched third place after escaping with a 9-8 win over Wild Bill's. Rolly Villanueva and Nolan Cultura, from an 8-all count, delivered the final win for the Homeboyz after beating Juancho Mendoza and Nong Detdon in the final partner's 8-Ball event.

In the Tuesday league, the Voyagers were merciless in drubbing the Hustlers. Mark Butac, Brian Nelvis, and R.J. Mascarinas delivered the wins for the Voyagers in the race-to-9 contest.

The Shooters bagged the third place honors after a 9-0 shutout decision over Jonny's Crazy 8.

STARTING 'EM YOUNG CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Team Kids 'N Ba members pose with Chagi Cup organizer Kumiko Deleon Guerrero, left, after the annual wakeboarding tournament in Susupe. Team Kids 'N Ba placed second to Team Ossan.

ASIAN

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forming them of the agreement.

The 5th Asian Indoor Martial Arts Games will be the first step on the road to Oceania athletes competing in a full Asian Games calendar in the coming years. Chess, futsal, tennis, Muay Thai, the Russian martial art sambo, Turkic wrestling kurash, jiu jitsu, bowling, track cycling, swimming, indoor athletics, weightlifting (powerlifting), basketball, taekwondo, dance sport, kickboxing, belt wrestling, freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling, and cue sports (billiards and snookers) are the sports offered in the 5th AIMAG.

"This will be historic. This will be a first chance for cooperation between the two continents [Asia and Oceania]. Oceania has many champions," Al-Sabah was quoted as saying in an interview with the Agence France Presse.

Mitchell welcomed the historic agreement that would give Oceania athletes the chance to compete against Asia's best.

"We have to see how we can maximize the opportunities for our athletes."

Oceania athletes, after the AIMAG, would also be allowed to compete in the 8th Asian Winter Games from Feb. 19 to 26 in Sapporo, Japan and the 6th Asian Beach Games in Goa, India.

It is not yet known if the 17 Pacific states and the 7 associate members will be allowed to compete in the 2022 Asiad, which OCA is planning to move to 2023 since it coincides with the 2022 Tokyo Olympic Games.

The 17 Oceania member federations and the seven affiliates are also being invited by OCA to attend another meeting in Turkmenistan set in September 2015. American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Naur, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalo and Vanuatu are the 17 National Olympic Committees from Oceania. The CNMI, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Niue, Norfolk Island, Tokelau, and Wallis and Futuna are associate members.

Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Macau, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Yemen are the participating nations in the Asian Games.

The latest Asian Games (XVII) was held in Incheon, South Korea from Sept. 19 to Oct. 4 this year and close to 10,000 athletes from 45 nations in the region competed. Jakarta, Indonesia will host the next edition in 2018 after Vietnam backed out due to lack of funds.

The ONOC and OCA historic agreement came after Australia was accepted as a member of the Asian Football Confederation along with Guam.

SWEET

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morning, 6-2, 4-6, 11-9, at the Hyatt Regency Saipan tennis courts and then moved to Fiesta in the afternoon to oust George Lai and Sally Lee, 6-0, 6-4.

David Tai and Tan, on the other hand, drew a bye in the first round for taking the top seed in the division and earned the second finals berth after slipping past Eddie Wu and Cleofe Santos in three sets, 6-3, 4-6, 10-6.

Meanwhile, the mixed open 4.0 finale also went the distance with Joy Minor and Buddy Garote surviving their more than four-hour marathon match against Rosario and Diony Peralta, 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5).

The mixed open 4.0 title duel was a battle of unranked pairs with Minor and Garote stunning the top-seeded duo of Mihoko and Jim Tuttle, 7-5, 6-2. The Tuttle couple automatically advanced to the semis after drawing a bye in the first round, while Minor and Garote had to prevail against Reo and Sadako Arriola in another three-set match, 6-4, 6-7 (4-7), 10-1, to march into the semis of the upper half of the draw.

In the lower half of the draw, Rosario and Dunlop also pulled off an upset in three sets over the second-seeded Sally Lee and Erik Van Der Maas, 3-6, 6-4, 10-8. Peralta and Rosario arranged a semis tiff against Van Der Maas and Lee following a 6-4, 6-3 win over junior players Julia Ishikawa and Ken Song.

In the mixed doubles 3.0, the junior pair of Tania Tan and Clayton Izuka ruled the round-robin competition.

Tan and Izuka got a free win against Ron and Fish Wright (default) last Sunday to clinch the division championship. The winning duo earlier defeated the mother and son tandem of Merle and A.J. Hudkins, 6-1, 6-4, last Saturday to boost its title bid. The Hudkins settled for runner-up honors as they also downed the Wrights last Friday, 6-3, 6-0.

DIZON

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and Cesar Fortaleza (4:00:50) making up the Top 3 in the younger age group. Renato Calage (4:03:11), Paul Plunkett (4:08:36), and Manny Sitchon (4:36:44) took the podium finish in the 50-59 division, while Nutting was the sole competitor in the male 60-64 and clocked in at 6:33:39.

Patrick Camacho, who was the fastest among Guam riders after finishing fifth overall against four pros, led a 1-2 finish for the Southern contingent in the male 30-34 category as he timed in at 3:11:31, while compatriot Jeff Philips finished second (3:29:25). Saipan Arjay Noriega placed third (3:55:02).

Guam's Justin Nieves, who finished eighth overall, ruled the male 14-19 division with former Saipan resident Jake Jones coming in at second (3:14:02) and Jerome Diyco of Saipan finishing third (3:19:11).

Jonathan Martin, the second best Guam overall finisher at seventh, won the male 20-24 division with a time of 3:12:56 or 21 seconds behind Korean pro and sixth overall Kaon Cho (3:12:35).

Saipan's Kaity Mattos (25-29, 4:34:58); South Korean Ji Hye Kim (5:07:01) and Chinese Taipei's Shu-Ya Li (5:56:28) in the 30-34; Jonghwan Hwang of South Korea (40-44, 4:16:07); Saipan's Kanae Quinn (4:29:45) and Margaret Rose (4:35:50) in the 45-49; and Lorie Hutchison (4:31:51) and Susan Marchitti (5:18:11) in the 50-54 were the women's top finishers in their respective age groups.

Saipan's Jomer Enriquez led the list of winners in the men's mountain bike division as he topped the male 20-24 age group with a time of 4:44:52, while Will Schroeder (5:11:17) and Pengfei Song (6:21:26) were 1-2 in the male 25-29.

Charlie Sendin claimed the 30-34 crown (3:48:21); Saipan's Sunny Loma (5:11:05) beat Rota's David Bamba (5:19:20) for the male 35-39 title; and Bob Ferrer (3:38:44), Dencio Bautista (3:56:59) and Katsuki Ishimatsu of Japan (4:01:40) were the Top 3 finishers in the male 40-44 division.

Saipan swept the male 45-49, 50-54, and 55-59 divisions with Noel Altamirano (3:55:46), Nestor Abing (4:35:13), and Russ Quinn (5:07:03); George De Guzman (4:10:47), Floro Derexes (5:01:49), and Donaldo Naz (5:10:33); and Romeo Guevarra (4:22:14), Florence Antonio (4:34:35), and Rey Tentia (5:25:49).

Athena Andrews, also from Saipan, bagged the female 30-34 trophy with at time of 4:07:11.

2014 FA Youth Challenge Cup Finals

PHOTOS BY ROSELYN B. MONROYO

MP United's Jehn Joyner, right, uses his shin to stop the ball during their title game against Tan Holdings FC in the 2014 FA Youth Challenge Cup last month at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

MP United's Kennedy Izuka offers a helping hand to Yoshi Mafnas after their collision.

MP United's Bob Kim carries an injured Daniel Lim out of the field.

Tan Holdings' Sean Perez signals to his teammate after MP United's Kennedy Izuka kicked the ball out.

Tan Holdings FC's Sean Perez collides with three MP United players, while teammate Se Young Kim gets ready to kick the loose ball.

MP United's Jireh Yobech, right, is tightly guarded by Tan Holdings' Michael Fidelino.

MP United's Daniel Lim tries to dribble out of traffic.

MP United's Tanapon Unsa, second right, dribbles past Tan Holdings' Yoshi Mafnas, right.

Tan Holdings' Hark Joshua Galarion falls on the ground after trying to go for save, while Emmanuel Aniana, left, and Alan Hinson step in for help defense.

KSPN's Bob Coldeen takes a video footage of an MP United team in huddle.

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Sports

LeBron, Cavs roll in front of royal audience
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Asian Games await Pacific athletes

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Pacific island nations and other states need to up their ante as a higher level of competition await them after the Oceania National Olympic Committees and the Olympic Council of Asia signed a historic agreement allowing them to compete in future Asian Games.

Northern Marianas Sports Association president Michael A. White made the announcement during the group's monthly meeting last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium conference room.

ONOC president Dr. Robin Mitchell, OCA chief Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, and Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games executive committee chairman Dayanch Gulgeldiyev signed the memorandum of understanding during an OCA meeting on Nov. 28 at the Oguzkent Sofitel Hotel in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

White said ONOC secretary general Ric Blas sent a letter to the regular 17 IOC and 7 associate members from Oceania in-

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THE KASELEHLIE PRESS
Micronesian athletes compete in the hurdles event in the 2014 Micronesian Games in Pohnpei in July. Oceania National Olympic Committees and the Olympic Council of Asia signed an agreement allowing Pacific, including those in Micronesia, and Oceania bets to compete in Asian Games.

Sweet revenge for Dunlop, Rosario

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

It's payback time for the pair of Dun Dunlop and Marivic Rosario as they led two other mixed doubles winners in the 6th Tan Holdings Tennis Classic.

Dunlop and Rosario took home the mixed doubles 40-and-above championship, following a 6-3, 6-4 win over Lydia Tan and Guam's David Lai last Sunday at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. The victory avenged Rosario and Dunlop's loss to the same duo in last year's finale. Tan and Lai outclassed Rosario and Dunlop in their three-set title match in 2013, 6-3, 6-7 (7-5), 6-3.

Dunlop and Rosario, who were unseeded in the six-team draw earned a return trip to the finals after eliminating two foes. The winning pair first booted out Joy Minor and Lope Padilla last Saturday

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Marivic Rosario goes for a smash, while teammate Dun Dunlop stays back during their title game against David Lai and Lydia Tan in the mixed doubles 40-and-above division of the 6th Tan Holdings Tennis Classic last Sunday at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

Dizon leads Saipan charge in 'Hell'

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Nap Dizon topped his age division to lead four other Saipan-based winners in the men's road bike event of last Saturday's 8th Hell of the Marianas century cycle race.

Dizon was the fastest among the Saipan riders, finishing the grueling around-the-island race in 3:19:10 to barge in the Top 10 overall rankings. He pedaled an average of 18.67 miles per hour for a split time of 1:23:56 to rule the male 35-39 age group.

Fellow Saipan rider Rich Asuncion finished almost an hour later at 4:08:26 to place second in the division, while Guam's Michael Mattix came in at third (4:36:56).

Tyce Mister, Willie Barbo, Renato Calage, Steve Nutting, and former Saipan resident Lewie Tenorio were the other age group division winners.

Tenorio, who finished 15th overall, clinched the male 45-44 crown with a time of 3:34:53 to relegate Manny Masculino of Guam to second place (3:47:51). XTERRA World Championship veteran Peter Prestley was 18 seconds behind for third place (3:48:09).

Mister, a multi-sport athlete, overcame a flat tire just past the San Vicente area going uphill to Isa Drive to rule the male 45-49 category. He reached the finish line in front of the Mariana Resort & Spa in 3:47:03. Tinian's Allen Perez was in second (4:12:48), while Young Hak Kwon of South Korea bagged third place honors at 4:16:10.

It was a Saipan sweep in the male 50-54 and 55-59 divisions with Willie Barbo (3:51:15), Roberto Tamondong (3:53:20)

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JON PEREZ
Saipan's Nap Dizon, center, makes a turn as he heads toward Bird Island along with two other riders in last Saturday's 8th Annual Hell of the Marianas century cycle race.